

# Why Russia and NATO fail to reach a normative partnership

*An analysis of the post-Cold War period*

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# Why does Russia and NATO fail to reach a normative partnership

## *-An analysis of the post-Cold War period*

By Signe Lill Sletmoen

Masters Thesis in Political Science,

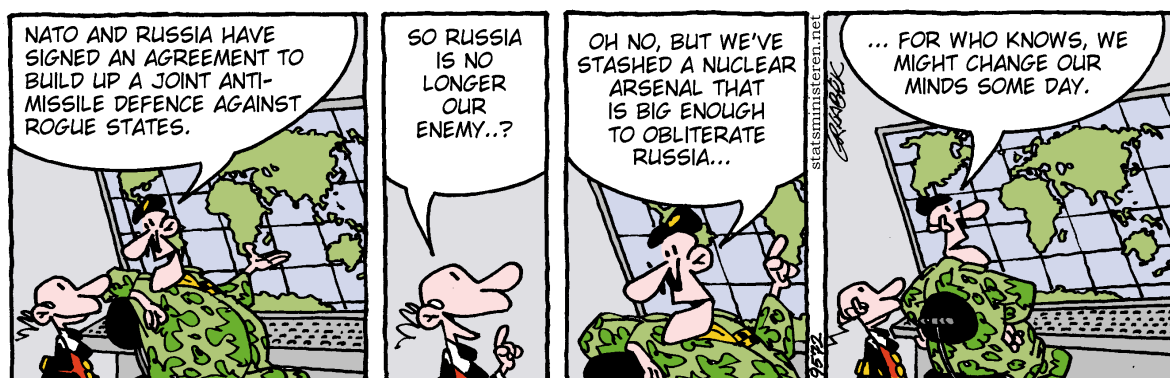
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# Summary

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Russian Federation both stated that ‘we no longer see each other as adversaries’. The opportunity for finally making the ‘Common European Home’ come true was present. During the ‘honeymoon’ in the first half of the 1990s, the diplomatic relations normalized, and in 1994 Russia and NATO signed the Partnership for Peace (PfP) agreement, as a first step towards an official partnership. However, after this short period of political prosperity, the relationship again developed to the worse. This master’s thesis aims to examine why Russia and NATO failed to establish a normative partnership, using Martin Smith’s definitions on partnership types. By examining important historical events, official doctrines, existing research on the field and official statements in light of realism and constructivism theory, I try to illuminate whether the problems with collaborating may be explained by a mutual military fear of each other that could be traced back mainly to the Cold War; or if it is due to a considerable difference in political culture, norms and values due to their distinct history. This thesis should offer an insight to the rather fluctuating relationship between Russia and NATO in the post-Cold War history, and explain reasons for why this is. It will also offer an indication of what kind of political and diplomatic actions NATO and Russia have to undertake in the future in order to develop a normative partnership, if that is what they desire.



Carsten Graabæk©

# Personal note

In order to contextualize the choice of topic for this master's thesis I would like to add a few sentences about the author. Borne in the mid-1980, growing up during the dissolution of the Soviet Union, I can still remember the special ambience when news reporters reported home from the remarkable occurrences in Eastern Europe during this period. Russia has never been, and will most likely never be 'any other state', and has always been of special interest to me. In Norway, as in many of the NATO member states, one often gets socialized into a bit of skepticism towards the Russian Federation. Yet, I never managed to decide whether I agreed to this skepticism, or if Russia deserved a more nuanced discussion. When I in the spring of 2010 was fortunate enough to be invited to participate in an exchange program to St. Petersburg, I was able to challenge these questions. The lectures in Russian Foreign and Security Policy offered an invaluable insight into the Russian foreign policy thinking, and its relations with the West. As I returned to Norway, the topic for my master's thesis was already clear.

## Acknowledgments

First and foremost I would like to give my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Magnus Petersson for guiding me throughout this process. His remarkable insight to this field of politics has been of utmost value and appreciation. I also admire his immense patience with me, his calmness, and his ability to see progress when I saw adversity. Second, I would also like to thank Nina and Hege at the IFS library for always being so helpful and well informed. –And for accommodating me with necessary literature throughout the year. Third, I want to thank everyone who has helped me by reading my text, discussed the topic with me, and given thumbs up and motivated me throughout the year. I never walked alone! Last but not least I will also give a special thanks to Arne, who has been standing by my side unconditionally, despite the fact that I have afforded President Putin's statement more attention than I have given him, and even though I have used more time on NATO than I have given us.

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# 1 Introduction

*“I cannot forecast to you the actions of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma. But there may be a key, and that key is Russian national interest”.*

Winston Churchill

(Lo, 2002, p. 1)

Security policy is every state's main concern. After the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, European states divided into sovereign territorial states, constantly struggling for their national security and freedom. In the years that followed, wars were the norm rather than the exception. After the devastation of two devastating World Wars, the most powerful states in Europe gathered in the search for a final solution for European security in order to regain peace and stability. Hobbes' 'state of nature' claim that war of all against all is a natural state since there is no higher rule to enforce order (Nye, 2007, p. 4). In Europe, the eager to create such a higher rule to prevent states from going to war proved to be quite successful. However, after the end of the Second World War, another sort of conflict occurred. The West feared the powerful Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, commonly known as the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was believed to be a threat to European peace and stability, and when they started to expand westwards, some of the more powerful states in Western Europe decided to make an alliance. In 1949 in Washington D.C, the North Atlantic Treaty was signed, which marked the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)<sup>1</sup>.

The year 1991 mark the most outstanding shift in European security. With the fall of the Soviet Union, the balance of power in Europe changed. The Russian Federation, descendant of what were once the most immediate and serious threats to the European security alliance during the Cold War, announced that they no longer considered themselves an adversary to the West. Still, the relations between NATO and Russia stayed tense, causing both parties political headaches. Throughout the 1990s and beyond, the political climate has shifted

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<sup>1</sup> Also referred to as 'the Alliance'

several times. However, today the Russian Federation is incorporated in the NATO-Russia Council, and considered a strategic partner to the West. Still, any further development in the relationship seems to be difficult to reach.

There is an infinite amount of literature about Russia. –Its impressive history, the enormous territory, the traditions of autocratic rule and extreme power, and what by some has been described as a certain eccentricity has been examined, discussed, admired and criticized. However, the question why Russia does not managed to incorporate in NATO the same way most other European states have managed is still open for appendance. Several answers have been given in the past. One is that the reason is that Russia once was a feared enemy of Europe. Still, West Germany managed to become part of the alliance only ten years after Hitler-Germany fell. Further, it has been argued it is due to their communist past. However, that does not explain how states like Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia managed to become normative partners with NATO in 2004. Also, it has been claimed that it is a lack of interest of will. Still, all three presidents of the Russian Federation have been positive to such a membership. –And NATO on their side has also been eager to establish closer ties with Russia, as we can see from the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC). At the Carnegie Endowment in Brussels the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2009, Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said in his speech “of all of NATO’s relationships with Partner countries, none holds greater potential than the NATO-Russia relationship”. Yet, “none is so much burdened by misperceptions, mistrust and diverging political agendas” (Rasmussen, 2009). Whenever the word *Russia* is mentioned, it seems to give a number of strong associations far beyond just the territory in which it operates or the sum of the people living there. This, I believe, might be part of the answer why Russia is such a special case in the partnership category, and thus does not integrate with NATO. However, it could also be that the two former adversaries still hold some fear for each other, and therefore cling to the ‘balance of power’ thinking, instead of going uniting in partnership. This is the question that I will return to shortly. Before this, I will present what is meant by the term ‘partnership’.



## Partnership

The term *partnership* has been used several times in the literature when defining the relations between Russia and NATO. Martin A. Smith<sup>2</sup> argues that there are three possible types or levels of partnership that Russia can enjoy within NATO. The first level of partnership to be considered is a *pragmatic partnership*. This is by Smith (Smith, 2006, p. 112) seen as a relation that is being motivated “fundamentally by concerns about protecting national interests and national security”. This kind of partnership does not include any shared understanding or agreements on matters beyond the ad hoc arrangements. During the Cold War, a few attempts of cooperation on e.g. arms reduction or joint peace agreements mach up to this level, but as Smith (2006) also acknowledges it can be discussed whether this is to be considered as a ‘partnership’ at all. The underlying necessity for a pragmatic partnership to function between Russia and NATO is an area of mutual problems, and mutual advantages in solving them. This may also be defined as so-called ‘zero-sum games’ (Smith, 2006). This does not include partnership in the way the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) discussed it during the Lisbon summit in November 2010. Nor is it what Anders Fogh Rasmussen has been mentioning in several announcements before, during and after the Lisbon Summit.

The second type of partnership is the one that was discussed during the Lisbon summit, namely *strategic partnership*. This kind of partnership calls for a broader agreement and common understanding amongst the partners on what is the overall nature of international relations. In security policy, the essential part is what – or who – constitutes a source of potential as well as actual security threats, as well as an agreement on what should be the most appropriate means in terms of responding to threats (Smith, 2006, p. 112). Still, despite an underlying agreement on how to conduct foreign policy, a strategic partnership does leave a notion that there might be changes to national interest that may affect the partnership from time to time. Smith further acknowledges that “strategic partnership are still founded on concerns about each partner’s relative national power, security and prestige in relations to other international actors” (Smith, 2006, p. 112). In the case of Russia and NATO, strategic partnership calls for a common understanding of what should be the main priorities

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<sup>2</sup> Senior Lecture in defense and international affairs at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, UK.

internationally, but it ensure the Russian government's entitlement to be in control of their own national security and internal domestic affairs within their own territory.

The third alternative is a *normative partnership*. This is the kind of partnership eligible for full integration of Russia in the North Atlantic alliance. In a normative partnership the relations between Russia and NATO will be shaped by agreements on “a common set of behavioral norms, values and standards” (Smith, 2006, p. 112). This makes Russia and NATO not only a community of security, but also a community of shared *values*. Alliances like NATO are dependent upon a low conflict level. Common values and norms for how to respond to crisis are therefore crucial in order to ensure stability and efficiency within the Alliance. A normative partnership, as opposed to the two mentioned above, does not necessarily need a common external threat or enemy in order to league together. In a normative partnership the focus is to a larger extent on the shared values and norms, and agreements go far beyond just the actual ad hoc arrangements in actual crisis. In order to establish a well functioning normative partnership, all partners must have equal rights to scrutinize each other in order to get an open and transparent relationship. This does not only mean transparency in foreign policy making and in cases where both are involved directly, but also openness and transparency in internal affairs like state spending, military and defense planning, democracy, human rights, etc. (Smith, 2006). The result of a normative partnership is thus more commitment and control, but also more insight into the other parties political and security planning, which provides more trust and security. Normative partnership is however not necessarily full ‘membership’. Membership can provide legal rights beyond what a normative partnership includes. In the end, it is also important to include that these three types of partnership not can be considered as mutually exclusive. They may all be present at the same time, describing different political areas. However, the discussion in the analysis will focus on the overall, general tendencies, and not specific areas of politics.

## 1.1 Research Question

Under chapter three, “partnerships”, in the group of expert’s report, the expert panel state, “On the list of NATO partners, Russia is in its own category” (Albright, Jeroen van der Veer, & Group of experts, 2010). As the introduction implies in addition to the citation above, I will examine why this is so:

**Which are the dominant reasons why the Russian Federation and NATO fail to reach a normative partnership?**

The guiding assumption for this thesis is that Russia and NATO either are too different in terms of political ideas, norms and values. This would make it difficult to agree upon a common security vision for Europe within the framework of NATO. Or, that Russia and NATO still show signs of mutual mistrust, as during the Cold War. The lack of partnership progress could then be explained by a mutual fear for their national security. Russia and NATO share a very unique history, and without an understanding or a consideration of the historical impact, it is impossible to understand the complexity of this matter. In order to answer this research question I will therefore analyze the Russian-NATO relationship between 1991 and 2010. I will focus on important historical events that have impacted their relationship. In the discussions I will offer theoretical explanations for how Russia and NATO have dealt with these situation and what impact this has had on their capability to move forward into a normative partnership.

In chapter 2, I will present the methodological framework for this thesis. I have chosen to start this chapter with defining the two cases, Russia and NATO. Here I will explain how the two are organized, and list four obvious differences between the two, which I have to take into consideration. Secondly, I will present the theoretical framework, which will be used in order to conduct the analysis in order to answer the research question. Hence, the theory becomes an integrated part of the research method. In chapter 3 I will thoroughly examine important events during the time period from 1991 to 2010. What is interesting about this period of time is that unexpected and important political occurrences take place, causing great changes to the European security environment. I will apply theoretical explanations, and analyze what these events and changes both within and between Russia and NATO have impacted their ability to

reach a normative partnership. In chapter 4 I will sum up the discussions from chapter 3, and see whether I can provide a proper answer to the research question. This part will not offer a final conclusion, but hopefully offer new insight into the Russia-NATO partnership debate. Here, I will also dare to give some of my own assumptions for what the near future might hold for the Russia-NATO partnership development.

## **2 Methodological Framework**

### **Introduction**

This thesis will offer an in-depth analysis of the Russian-NATO historical and political development, aiming to examine some of the factors that have hindered the Russian Federation and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to reach a normative partnership. First, I will present the two cases separately, starting with the Russian Federation and then the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Afterwards, I will discuss some obvious differences between the two, which are important in order to understand where the research question derives from, and why it is a unique case to study. Second, I will go through the research method that is used in the analysis, and explain why I believe a text analysis of a selected number of official concepts and statements in addition to secondary literature offers the best possible methodological approach to the thesis' question. Third, the theoretical perspectives will be presented and explained, before I explain how I will apply this theoretical approach in the analysis. Fourth, I will discuss the challenges that may encounter with this kind of research method, and explain how I am aiming to solve this in order to ensure a high validity.

### **2.1 The Units of Analysis**

The units of analysis are the Russian Federation and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). While the first case is a sovereign state, a Eurasian great power and a former adversary to Western Europe, the latter one is a security alliance established after the second World War, consisting of 28 member states; including Europe's greatest powers and the worlds only superpower. In the upcoming paragraphs I will define the two properly in order to explain how main characteristics have built up over time. Further, I will take into consideration the obvious differences given their distinct nature, and explain how it is possible to apply the theoretical framework to both cases, although Russia is a sovereign state, while NATO is a security alliance.

## **The Russian Federation**

The 'Russian federation' is here the sum of the governing body of Russia, the natural follower of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)<sup>3</sup>. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the Russian Federation was a complex process that developed over time. However, when Mikhail Gorbachev in 1991 organized a referendum across the Soviet Union, Boris Yeltsin saw the opportunity to place a second question on the referendum ballot asking the people of Russia if they supported a Russian presidency (Bacon, 2010, p. 23). Approval was duly gained. This was the first active step towards a Russian federation. On 21 September 1993, Boris Yeltsin dissolved the old two-tier system of Congress and Supreme Soviet, and established a new framework for state power (Remington, 2001 ; Sakwa, 2008). This resulted in the Russian Federation. Russia is today a semi-presidential system. The constitution from 1993 grants the president extensive power. The president is responsible for nominating the prime minister (Sakwa, 2008, p. 105). According to the constitution, "the president is the head of state and the guarantor of the constitution" (Article 80). The president is also head of the Security Council, confirms Russia's military and foreign policy doctrines, appoint the commander of chief of the Russian armed forces and, according to the constitution, exercises leadership of the foreign policy of the Russian Federation (Article 86) (Sakwa 2008:107). The word Kremlin, originally meaning the building in which the government is located, is often used as a synonym to the Russian government, understood as the sum of the political elite in the Russian Federation, or the higher members of government. Moscow, the main capital of Russia, is often used the same way. In this thesis 'Moscow' and 'Kremlin' will hence be used synonymously to the 'Russian political elite' or the 'government of Russia'.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the old Marxist-Leninist ideology had to be replaced by a new doctrine. Kremlin decided to create an official document that could form the basis for the Russian Federation's political foundation. This resulted in the creation of The National Security Concept (NSC) (Sakwa 2008). The NSC includes both the Foreign Policy Concept and the Military Doctrine. These documents outline the broader vision in foreign and security policy planning, and sets out to systematize the views on the content and main areas in the foreign policy activities in Russia. These concepts are in accordance with Russian

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<sup>3</sup> Hereafter also referred to as the Soviet Union

federal law, international law and international treaties that the Russian Federation is restrained to follow. Each new president formulates his own NSC document.

There are several Russian characteristics inherited from the Soviet Union era, which is still embraced and sustained by the contemporary Russian elite (Lo, 2002; Lomagin, 2005). The notion of being a great power stands out as the most important one. The Russian political elite does not see Russia as a normal state dating back to 1991. The common apprehension is that Russia is among the world's greatest powers, and deserves to be considered an equal to e.g. France, the United Kingdom but also the United States. Being part of the NATO's alliance as a secondary member state or as 'just any other partner' does therefore not seem far from a Russian point of view. Further, Russia also considers itself a regional hegemony, with special rights in the near abroad that used to be part of the Soviet empire. Hence, Russia reacts negatively to any Western interference in this area. This is obvious in the Russian response to NATO's enlargement debate, as will be discussed later in the analysis. Last, but not least, Russia has also an autocratic state-oriented rather than individual-oriented power, as opposed to the norm within the Alliance. The impact due to this will be explained in the paragraph for challenges and possibilities for comparison.

### **The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**

When the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)<sup>4</sup> was established in 1949, its mission was to be a political and military alliance, securing a collective defense and peace on the European continent (Discover NATO, 2010). NATO's enduring purpose is identified in their strategic concepts<sup>5</sup>, which identifies what NATO *is* and what it *ought to be* in the future. The North Atlantic Treaty<sup>6</sup>, signed in Washington D.C. on 4 April 1949, still constitutes NATO's main body. In order to define NATO I will rely on article 1 and 4 through 6 in the Washington Treaty. Article 1 states that the parties undertake to settle any international disputes in which they may be involved by peaceful means in order to secure peace, security and justice. The treaty also emphasizes that NATO will act in accordance with the United Nations. Further, Article 4 states that the parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of

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<sup>4</sup> Hereafter also referred to as 'the Alliance'.

<sup>5</sup> Hereafter also referred to as NATO's concept.

<sup>6</sup> Hereafter, also referred to as the Washington Treaty

the parties is threatened. Today, this might be the most important article. After the end of the Cold War, the level of military threat against the Alliance severely reduced. Article 5, which I will come back to, therefore no longer seemed as relevant. However, the consultation of other states in cases of military, economical or political threat is an enormously important part of the European security structure. Article 5, as I mentioned, might be the symbolically most important article in the Washington Treaty. Here, it is famously acknowledged that the parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all. Consequently, all member states take on an obligation and a right to assist those attacked if necessary. Finally, Article 6 defines the territory for the purpose of Article 5, which includes the territory of or under jurisdiction of any member state in Europe or North America, in addition to forces, vessels, aircraft or other military material when in or over these territories or on certain sea areas<sup>7</sup>. After the Cold War ended, NATO has released three strategic concepts that aim to define NATO's purpose in the post-Cold War era. Even though NATO is an organization, it has several qualities like a state. Each member state is represented in what could be seen as a government. In times of crisis, it also operates as one body, in accordance with the Washington Treaty. Also, even though each member state has the right to have their own opinion about international affairs, NATO as an organization offers the official opinion that is based on consensus, and which is binding for each member state to support. When I look at NATO in this thesis, it is NATO's official opinion I use, and not the separate opinion of any of the member states.

The most obvious threat to European security at that time was commonly believed to be the Soviet Union and its communist ideology that was feared by the capitalist West. According to alliance theory, alliances will cease to exist when the threat that originally motivated the establishment of the alliance disappears or severely decrease (McCalla, 1996). However, NATO has survived the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, and has even become strengthened due to integration of several former Warsaw Pact states. Today, NATO has developed into being not only a traditional defense community and a security alliance, but also increasingly an alliance of values and political diplomacy, with an increased focus on Article 4. NATO has also taken on new security challenges by going 'out-of-area'.

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<sup>7</sup> All articles are from The North Atlantic Treaty, Washington D.C. - 4 April 1949 retrieved from NATO's homepage [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_17120.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm)



The so-called 'out-of-area' debate runs out of a more liberal interpretation of Article 6, and has transformed NATO into not only a European, but also increasingly a global actor. This has severely changed their security agenda, and necessitated new partner states and increased areas of influence.

### **Asymmetrical cases: challenges and possibilities for comparison**

Due to NATO's open door policy confirmed at the Lisbon Summit in 2010, the analysis will be based on the assumption that it is Russia that has to change in order to make a normative partnership happen. However, there are four main areas where Russia and NATO are not symmetrical, which will cause underlying problems on both sides. These are 1) the geographical challenges, 2) the political differences, 3) the economical aspect and 4) the military aspect. While the geographical and political differences may pose problems in terms of reaching a normative partnership, the economical and military aspect may play in favor of such integration. Following, I will explain each of the four asymmetrical areas. First, the size of the Russian continent is important in terms of understanding why Russia has been, and must be treated differently compared to the other Warsaw Pact states. Russia continues to be the world's largest country measured in size, with a territory about the same size as the total area of NATO's member states today. To include this extensive territory under Article 6, and hence article 5, is almost unimaginable. However, when it comes to population, NATO's total population do by far outnumber the approximately 140 million people (2010) living in Russia. Further, Russia has an impressive 20 241 km long border towards several non-NATO member states, e.g. China, North Korea, Mongolia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. This, in addition to Russia's immense coastline will definitely add a number of new challenges to NATO's security planning, if Russia was to be included under Article 5. As a result, the economical cost will also skyrocket, something that might be difficult for the member states to accept during harsh financial times. A normative partnership with Russia would also result in common border between NATO and the Middle East and Asia. This would also create new strategic dilemmas for the Alliance.

Secondly, the political and democratic history and culture is severely different in Russia compared to the member states in the Alliance. After World War II, the West and the Soviet Union developed very differently when it comes to regime type. And regime type affects the way foreign affairs are conducted. In a democracy where the people are invited to give their opinion, the decision-making process in foreign affairs are often affected. State leaders are

often affected by the voice of the people, and whether or not they want membership in certain alliances or organizations. In a more autocratic regime as the Soviet Union represented, the voice of the people is of minor importance when it comes to political decision-making. While NATO is founded on the Western values and ideas shaped by the European revolutions and reforms, Russia has inherited the much more authoritarian tradition from the Soviet Union. In the West, liberal values of individual freedom and liberal rights like human security and societal security dominate. This is seen in the bottom-up organization of human security first, and the state being a tool for human prioritization. In the West the question is therefore ‘what can NATO do for the security of the people?’ (see e.g. Dahl, 1989). In Russia it seems to be an opposite approach to state vs. people, where state security in the traditional way, with emphasis on border security, and governmental security is seen as a prerequisite to individual security. In the Russian tradition, a free state is therefore more important than a free people, and the people are seen as a tool in order to secure the state. Thus, Russia and NATO might be driven by different motivation when it comes to security policy.

Thirdly, there is an important economical aspect in the cooperation and partnership between the Alliance and Russia due to the major Russian oil and gas reserves. Russia supply NATO member states with necessary oil and gas, and to secure this delivery both in peacetime as well as in times of war is important. The Russian energy resources have also proven to be an important bargaining tool in Russian coercive diplomacy. To include Russia as a normative partner would thus give NATO a more stable energy security, and make the Alliance less vulnerable. Fourth, while Russia and NATO balanced each other relatively well during the Cold War; the situation today is in NATO favor. To raise the level of military development and social development to a level where Russia matches up with the rest of NATO will cost a lot. This has to be taken into consideration if Russia was to join NATO. Russia’s military equipment is old and out-dated and the personnel not professionalized enough. In order to make the Russian military compatible with the NATO forces, reforms are needed (Sakwa, 2008). However, Russia is able to contribute with an extensive number of personnel and would also take a fair part of the burden sharing in a conflict. Further, Russia would increase the factor of deterrence, as NATO would expand massively. In the long run, it could therefore be valuable to have Russia on board.

## 2.2 Research method

In order to analyze which factors that hinder Russia and NATO in reaching a normative partnership, I will carry out a case study. John Gerring notes “case connotes a spatially delimited phenomenon observed at a single point in time or over some period of time” (2007, p. 19). A more technical definition would be that:

*“A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clear”.*

(Yin, 2003, p. 13)

Here, the case is the Russian Federation as a potential normative partner with NATO. The time period stretches from the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 and up until the Lisbon Summit in November 2010.

### **Analysis of Russia-NATO history**

As Pouliot (Pouliot, 2010, p. 5) argues “it is not only who we are that drives what we do; it is also what we do that determines who we are”. By looking into the post-Cold War history and focus on political, economical and military events; how they emerged, how they were dealt with, and how they were solved; it is possible to create a picture of how political actors behave, and what differs between leaders, states, and organizations. The constructivist Emmanuel Adler goes as far as to say that

*“Rather than using history as a descriptive method, constructivism has history ‘build in’ as part of theories. Historicity, therefore, shows up as part of the contexts that make possible social reality, the path-dependent processes involving structural and agent change and the mechanisms involved in the explanation of change”.*

Emanuel Adler (2002)

“Since no social realities are natural, they are the results of political and social processes that are rooted in history” (Pouliot, 2010, p. 63). Hence, a historical perspective will offer a solid

explanation for how the Russia-NATO relationship has developed, and why Russia faces so many difficulties on its way towards a closer partnership with NATO. Over the twenty years that have past since the Cold War ended, several major events have changed the security environment in Europe. This has impacted the Russia-NATO relationship. I have therefore chosen to divide this period into five periods. The first period will cover the years from 1991 to 1993/94, which I characterize as a period of ‘identity crisis’ in Russia, due to their lack of an identity in the ‘new’ Europe. This period has also been characterized as a ‘honeymoon’ (see e.g. Smith, 2006) between NATO and Russia because of the increasingly good relations between the two former adversaries after 1991. The second period goes from 1993/94 to 2000. These years are characterized by both an improvement in the relations, but also a gradual decline. The third period covers Vladimir Putin’s first presidential term from 2000 until 2004. Here, the European return to ‘hard security’ leads to a ‘soft cooperation’ between Russia and NATO on both hard and soft security issues. Fourth, the period from 2004 to 2007 is mainly shaped by the fact that Russia returns to their ‘great power habitus’, and are more active in global affairs. This continues during the fifth, and last, period from 2004 to 2010. As several crises occur, the diplomatic relations developed throughout the 1990s and onwards are put to the test.

Within each period I will discuss why Russia and NATO is not capable of reaching an agreement for normative partnership, as it is defined by Smith (2006). In order to explain this, I will apply the theoretical framework as laid out thoroughly in chapter 2.3. The aim is to find a pattern that might reveal whether the factors for Russia and NATO’s lack of progression are due to mainly *realpolitik* or a lack of a common ‘*we-ness*’. These theoretical approaches are not mutually exclusive, and may very well function supplementary. In the discussion I will therefore rely on general tendencies rather than just one occurrence or document. The discussion will then form the basis for my conclusion.

## **Text analysis**

When analyzing the post-Cold War Russia-NATO relationship, text material offers a valuable insight because this period is both well documented and extensively studied. Pouliot (2010, p. 64) argues that an inductive view of documents, other text material and historical events, in addition to a more interpretive historical dimension will develop both subjective and objective

knowledge. This is because we are given an insight in how social agents attribute practicality into their own reality and objectified knowledge, which derives from ‘standing back’ from the time and place where the different incidents took place, and an opportunity to contextualize it in a historical perspective. For the analysis I will therefore rely on a selected number of earlier research, secondary literature and official doctrines. In addition to this I will make use of speeches, statements and news interviews where representatives of both the Russian Federation and NATO are represented. To rely on previous research can sometimes be problematic. Conclusions drawn by other scientists may appear as ‘truths’. I have therefore chosen to compare a number of different sources in order to test their validity. The research chosen is also of high quality, and is carefully examined before taken into account. The reason behind this is that I believe there is too much valuable information in previous literature, not to take it into account. Twenty years is also a fairly long period of time, and this research offers thick information about past events that are difficult to get primary sources on today.

Next to the secondary literature I will also consult NATO’s Strategic Concepts issued in 1991, 1999 and 2010. In addition to these main sources I will include relevant documents from NATO’s homepage, where statements, speeches, and reports are released continually. In addition to secondary literature on the Russian Federation, I will also include the Foreign Policy Concept’s from 2000 and 2008, the Russia’s National Strategy to 2020, in addition to speeches and statements given by the president and other officials on Kremlin’s official homepage, Russia Today<sup>8</sup>, or collected from books on this field. The official documents will give an insight to the *official response* to foreign security aspects within Russia and NATO. Statements and speeches are included because I believe that they may supplement the written sources. Official documents give a solid picture of the overall tendency during a particular period. Interviews and speeches, on the other hand are more spontaneous, and may reveal more accurate tendencies right then and there. In addition to this, interviews and other oral statements are often less prepared and may therefore be more honest and descriptive. While an official doctrine may take months to write with several high officials consulting each other

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<sup>8</sup> Russia Today (RT) is a global television network based in Russia and funded by the Russian government. RT offers English translation as standard. All news on RT is from a Russian point of view.

to make the language correct, an oral statement might be more impulsive and spontaneous. Statements are therefore meant to balance the official texts, and offer a broader perspective.

## 2.3 Theoretical Perspectives

The theoretical foundation of this current thesis will draw assumptions in international politics after the end of the Cold War in 1991. The post-Cold War period offers a number of political theories aiming to explain and predict the international political system, however I have chosen to include realism and constructivism. I will start out with realism, since this has been the traditional way of explaining international relations, and especially Russian foreign policy relations towards the West and NATO. Then, I will continue with constructivism as an alternative theoretical explanation, because of the totally different perspective that is offered by constructivist thinking. While realism is merely based on material, economical and military power-maximization and capabilities, constructivism offers a theoretical framework based on the idea of differences in ideas, norms and values. Hence, I will test whether the unfulfilled partnership between Russia and NATO is best explained by *real*-political factors or factors explained by constructivism. Following, I will give a short introduction of the international environment that states are part of. Then, I will return to realism and constructivism theory, in order to give a proper definition of the two. Afterwards, I will explain how I will apply these theories to the analysis.

### Introduction

*“Politics is not a monotonic phenomenon. At times it is a mystique, a matter of faith, a secular religion; at other times the logic of politics is no less practical, no less ‘matter of fact’, than the logic of economics”.*

(Sartori, 1969, p. 411)

The international system consists of independent, sovereign and equal nation states. Thus, all nation states are free and independent in conducting their domestic policy as well as their foreign policy relating to other states or organizations (Kamath, 1990). Still, as the word ‘system’ indicates, all states are part of a community of states. As Secretary-General in the United Nations (UN) Ban Ki-moon stated:

*“Our times demand a new definition of leadership - global leadership. They demand a new constellation of international cooperation - governments, civil society and the private sector, working together for a collective global good”.*

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon  
Speech at World Economic Forum  
Davos, Switzerland,  
29 January 2009

The constellation of an international cooperation between states and the importance of international law put some restriction to states, and their freedom and independence in policy-making. During the Cold War, most theorists argued that balance of power; or rather a ‘balance of terror’ shaped the international environment. A massive military rearmament was deterring states from going to war. Security, theorists said, was stability and military power (see the debate in Lebow, 2007). Nevertheless, after the Cold War, military power was only seen as one in many ways to maintain stability and security. States, especially in Europe got more interconnected through agreements, alliances, trade and cooperation, leaving military power a matter of secondary importance as a measurement on stability. They emphasized the importance of common understandings, values, ideas, language etc. I will now go deeper into these different kinds of theoretical approaches.

## **2.4 Realism**

Realism theory can be said to have displayed fundamental political thoughts for almost 2500 years (Lebow, 2007, p. 53) and, thus, offered the main theoretical explanation for international relations and state behavior until the end of the Cold War. First, realism is based on the assumption that states are the main actors on the international stage. Second, states are unitary actors; meaning that domestic factors like regime type, the leader(s), and their personality does not have any impact. Third, states are considered to be rational actors, meaning that they have optional alternatives, and that they choose their alternative after a rational decision-making process. And fourth, that the international order is characterized by anarchy, creating a permanent security vacuum (Thorun, 2009, pp. 17-18). This is a

traditional vision that needs to be expressed with some modifications when applied to international relations today. Implicit in the realist theory lays the assumption that realist states always put their nations best interests first. Taylor (Taylor, 1978) defines *national interest* a situation that benefits the whole rather than just one part of a state. Yet, this definition is at best a bit vague. *Interest* may be indicating plurality of demands, wishes and desires communicated to the policy-makers by the political community (Kamath, 1990, pp. 31-32). This definition equates interest with ‘common good’ or ‘public welfare’. If we combine the two, national interest will be the common good of a whole state, rather than for just one area or one part of the state. Or, in other words, what is the most desirable and benefitting situation for a nation-state.

In Morgenthau’s famous book *Politics Among Nations*, he argues that all politics is a struggle for power that is “inseparable from social life itself” (Morgenthau situated in Lebow, 2007, p. 55). He also says that the main signpost that helps political realists to understand international politics is the concept of interest defined in terms of power (Morgenthau & Thompson, 1993, p. 5). Here, *power* is seen as an objective category that is universally valid meaning that it does not change over time. Realists also expect state leaders to be able to distinguish between their own opinions and their official duty as a leader (Morgenthau & Thompson, 1993). State leaders may very well act upon their own philosophy or political sympathy in order to gain popularity, but they still manage to distinguish between their official duty and their private preferences in order to govern in accordance with the nations best interest. Further, realists do not lack concern on political ideals and moral principles, but they require a sharp distinction between what is desirable; everywhere at all times, and what is possible under the concrete circumstances (Morgenthau & Thompson, 1993). This has to do with the aspect of *national interest* being power-maximization, rather than focusing on what is seen as morally correct. In terms of realism, *material-institutional capital* refers to military forces, money and material riches (industrial capacity, demographics, infrastructure, military equipment etc.), as well as alliances, ‘friends’, and institutional ties like the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (Pouliot, 2010, p. 148).

Closely related to national interest is the term *national security*. States justifies political force with their right to secure national security (Kamath, 1990). State interest will in most cases be



synonymous with what is in accordance with national security, since it is in each states interest to secure security. According to Robert E. Osgood, Jr., national security “necessarily denotes a nation’s determination to preserve certain interests, at all costs” (Situating in Kamath, 1990, p. 40). These *certain interests* are here first and foremost state’s basic principles like national integrity, political independence and fundamental governmental institutions. During the Cold War, *balance of power*, or balance of threat, was an important aspect of world stability and security. The balance of power between the United States of America and the Soviet Union was an important factor why it did not escalate to ‘hot-war’ between the two. Today, balance of power is less obvious as the international community has shifted from a bipolar, via unipolar, towards an increasingly multipolar structure. Realists today still consider military capability and alliances as the very foundation of security (Lebow, 2007, p. 56). However, as the classical realist such as Thucydides acknowledged, military power is a double-edged sword, since extensive military capacity is just as likely to provoke war as to prevent conflicts (Lebow, 2007, p. 56). In the relation between Russia and NATO this is an important aspect, since increased military capacity within one side seemingly always provokes conflicts between the two.

## 2.5 Social Constructivism

The end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union hastened the decline of realism as theoretical explanation for international relations (Lebow, 2007, p. 53). This was mainly because of the new range of political problems that occurred, which realism did not explain satisfactorily. As early as the 1940s, Carr (1946:148-149, situated in Taylor 1978:127) added to realism theory that given the continuity of institutions and other considerations, it is impossible to analyze international politics without attributing personality to the state. Social constructivists manage to capture this perspective by adding the element of collective *ideas* when analyzing states foreign policy making. Social constructivists believe that international life is *social* in the sense that states relate to one another through ideas, and *constructivist* in the sense that these ideas help define who and what states are (Thorun, 2009, p. 22). This offers a new way to view nation states. It creates a picture of each state being unique, and calls for a deeper understanding of history, facilities and political will. They acknowledge that

nation-states are built up by people, and that these people can affect the way international policy is planned and set out in life. Constructivists, broadly defined, share a critique of the static material assumptions of traditional international relations theory, and especially realism (Fierke, 2007). Constructivism is therefore not a supplement to realism theory, but a whole different way of interpreting the world of social science and the way states function. The critical movements in the 1980s and 90s shared the aim of changing nuclear status quo. In the mid-to-late 1980s, questions began to be raised about the theories and scientific methods of international relations and the extent to which they were implicated in the production of international power (Fierke, 2007, p. 167).

After 1991, many of the earlier assumptions about the Cold War were questioned. Scholars within the realism school of thought had been focusing on material and structural causes, like balance of power, and did not believe that social mechanism or human characteristics could change this picture. When realism theory failed to predict and explain the end of the Cold War, in addition to the continuation of NATO despite the fall of their main adversary; the Soviet Union, realism theory was again questioned (Fierke, 2007). This boosted the emergence of alternative theoretical approaches to international relations. Constructivism has become an inescapable theoretical explanation for current international mechanisms (Zehfuss, 2002, p. 2). Further, Zehfuss acknowledges that the ‘debate’ within international relations theory will concentrate increasingly around rationalist and constructivists. Here, ‘rationalists’ refers to realists. Constructivists and realists main dispute is whether the reality in international relations are constant, or whether they change over time (Zehfuss, 2002). While realists claim that international relations are constant, and further that the main interests, motives, and means will stay the same over time despite constant changes in the international environment, constructivists believe that international relations are shaped by their surroundings, and will differ in accordance with time and place.

Wendt’s constructivism, which I will focus on, argues that political relations are made, and not given (Wendt, 1999; Zehfuss, 2002). This brings us to the *social* element. Politics is constructed through social interaction, and hence learned and adopted by states in interaction with other states. This ‘social’ part helps explain the core assumption in constructivism, and

distinguish it from realism. Constructivists see social basis rather than material power (Barkin, 2003) as important when understanding why states act the way they do. The emphasis on social dimensions and the possibility for rapid changes in the international security environment allow more emphasis on historical and cultural background, historical and cultural changes, help explain differences between states, and their interaction. As Barkin puts it, “what actors do in international relations, the interests that they hold, and the structures which they operate within are defined by social norms and ideas rather than by objective or material conditions” (2003, p. 326). In terms of *cultural-symbolic capital* constructivists mention artifacts, narratives and symbols that are used to define the world that surrounds us and that legitimize it (Pouliot, 2010, p. 148). Social constructivism therefore argues that states are part of a social system, where they are affected by each other’s norms, values and ideas (Fierke, 2007, p. 168) in major policy decisions, but where these differences also might lead to conflicts. While material factors stay more or less the same over time and are difficult to change, norms and values are learned and therefore easier changed. Still, one should not underestimate how deep-rooted a state’s culture is. To change an entire culture or a set of values takes drastic matters or, alternatively a very long period of time.

The main mechanism in a security community like NATO is, according to constructivists, the collective identity formation (Pouliot, 2010, p. 3). To further explain this, Pouliot quotes Wendt’s explanation “a cognitive process in which the Self-Other distinction becomes blurred and at the limit transcended altogether” (Wendt (1999) cited in Pouliot, 2010). While realists would claim that Russia is just ‘any another state’ in NATO’s near abroad, with its own political interests and security aspects put first, constructivists acknowledge that Russia is in a special position with a Russian ‘habitus’ that is different from NATO’s habitus. Here, Pouliot (2010) asks two important questions. What does it mean to talk about a Russian or NATO habitus? And the question all constructivists are so eager to answer, namely whether states are people too. Wendt claims that “states are real actors to which we can legitimately attribute anthropomorphic qualities like desire, beliefs, and intentionality” (Wendt, 1999, p. 197). This makes it possible to use an analysis of what states have done in the past, in order to understand why states act the way they do today. –And, to some extent, predict how states may act in certain situations in the near future.

Constructivists take each nation's particular identity into account, and explain why some states are more easily integrated into the Alliance than others, by social factors and historical differences. Constructivists therefore use Russia's political past and distinct identity as explanation for why it is such a unique case when it comes to reaching normative partnership with NATO. The idea that international relations are a social construction creates a picture of states being something more than just a power-maximizing organization concerned about their national interest. While the traditional view has been to look for material factors, like military capacity or economical strength; constructivists focus more on the norms and shared understanding of legitimate behavior. Returning to Pouliot, he emphasizes the 'we-ness' as the main component in security alliances (Pouliot, 2010, p. 3). In order to become part of an alliance, states have to adopt a 'we-thinking', and make it become part of a state's own self-understanding.

## 2.6 Realism and constructivism applied

The guiding assumption for this thesis is that Russia and NATO struggle to reach a partnership due to one of the following explanations: Either, the problem is explained by realism; emphasizing the *material means*. It might be that the views on what creates national security is incompatible, and that balance of power still is seen as the best way to ensure security and stability. Or, it could be that a constructivist approach is more suitable, emphasizing the need for a common goal, - or a common 'we-ness'. Several important political occurrences have taken place over the last twenty years. Political and military competition can explain some of them. Yet, others have been motivated by a lack of mutual understanding or an unwillingness to learn each other's norms and values, and become part of the 'we'. In most cases it will be a combination of the two. The challenge is therefore to make up a system for how to categorize an event or a time period to belong within one of the two categories. The way I will do this is to look at the *means* and the *goals* behind Russia and NATO's political actions. When Russia and NATO disagree over the *means*, e.g. whether or not to use military force in order to deter, or to force their policy through, this is often a sign of a dispute due to real-political manners. However, when the dispute is mainly on what is believed to be the best result or *goal*, it is most likely a result of a difference in political

values and norms for how to behave as a state, and a difference in the idea of what constitutes a beneficial foreign policy. –Or *what* states are best served by. In addition to this, it is important to include a more linguistic approach, looking for what kind of political *terms* that are used in order to describe the foreign policy conducted. How Moscow describes the political environment, their own political actions as well as NATO's, and how NATO does the same. In order to exemplify this, I can use the dispute over the planned missile defense shield in Europe. Russia and NATO agrees on the goal; to secure Europe from missiles shot from the Middle East and Asia. Still, they are not able to agree on *how* they are going to build it and who is going to be part of it with a so-called 'red-button right'. This points towards a realism explanation. It is not the aspect of power-maximization or national security they disagree on, since both are interested in this goal. Rather, it is the norms for how to cooperate, and it is an obvious lack of a common 'we-ness'. This can be confirmed by the linguistics used to discuss this issue. When a political occurrence is discussed I will look for the terms that are used to see if they are based on realism; with fear for state security, use of military threat, sanctions etc. in addition to a genuine lack of trust in each other. –Or if the terms are concentrated around cultural habitus, self-image, lack of collective identity and an agreed 'we-ness'.

Being part of an alliance gives benefits, as well as obligations, on two levels. First, there is the material level, in which NATO is the collective military defense. Second, it is the 'social' level, which can be defined as the common visions for where one wants to be in the future. – A notion of being part of something bigger; a community of values that is considered 'good' by the European community as a whole. In order to become a member of an alliance like NATO, both levels have to be accepted and appreciated in order to adapt to the new way of political thinking.

## 2.7 Validity

### Internal validity

The internal validity; whether it is a causal relationship between what is found in the text material and the reason why Russia and NATO do not reach on a normative partnership, is difficult to measure. The world of politics is complex and incidental. According to Pouliot (2010, p. 64), in the constructivist style of reasoning, “historical analysis and interpretation go hand in hand”. History can tell us not only who the Russian Federation *are*, but also what Moscow *do*. By observing the historical development, it is possible to in turn create a pattern for what is *normal* behavior, in order to be able to recognize *abnormal* behavior. The interpretation is, however, the weak link in this research. When an occurrence is being analyzed, it is important to strive for objectivity. One way of doing this is to freeze the event in time and room, and apply the theoretical framework with as little room for own interpretation as possible. Each event should therefore first be looked at as an isolated event, before any context is applied. I will also aim at sticking strictly to what the text material contains, and not allow for any prior assumptions to decide. This however extremely difficult, and might be a weakness in the analysis. When interpreting historical occurrences I will confront the concepts and see whether they are in accordance with the general trend during the particular time period.

However, decisions and opinions can be formed within the understanding of political correctness, political trade-offs, tactics etc, and not as a result of entirely rational processes. It could therefore be debated whether the official concepts really are good guiding tools for the actual formulation and implementation of foreign policy (Godzimirski, 2005). –Hence a poor measurement on what Russia and NATO think about future partnership, and why normative partnership is not achieved. In the article *Russia and NATO, Community if values or community of interests?* Jakub M. Godzimirski discusses this very same problem, but he further acknowledges that these official doctrines are “the best tools available to enable us to learn more about and get better insight into the mental world of the Russian policy- and decision-making community” (2005, p. 66). The official doctrine are therefore only guiding tools, and may differ from the actual decision-making in a certain case. Nevertheless, the doctrines still offer a valid glimpse into a state or organization’s strategies and visions. They

will therefore offer a good picture on the general tendencies for where Russia and NATO is going in terms of partnership. With the secondary literature and the historical analysis several aspects will be covered, with in total will secure a higher validity. As mentioned, the oral statements, comments, speeches etc. will also function as a supplement in order to broaden the aspect of the analysis and absorb more nuances.

## **External Validity**

Since there are no similar cases to apply findings to, external validity is a known weakness in case studies; and especially in single-case studies like this one. Further, it is always a risk of low external validity in text analyzes since it is difficult to conduct valid tests to verify findings. However, in order to argue against this critique, I have chosen to quote John Gerring (2007, p. 1), which notes: “sometimes, in-depth knowledge of an individual example is more helpful than fleeting knowledge about a larger number of examples”. In-depth knowledge on one case is valuable when establishing new theory and knowledge, and therefore appreciated despite the problem of generalization. To broaden our knowledge about the causes behind Russia and NATO’s incapability for moving towards a normative partnership is therefore interesting and valuable enough in itself. It does not need to be applied to other cases in order to have value. In turn, this knowledge may broaden our understanding of what could or should be done to increase the possibilities for normative partnership, if that is considered desirable. Said differently, finding out why they *cannot* unite, will help the understanding of *how to unite them*.

Secondly, hence the in-depth knowledge we are able to generalize if not to other cases, so at least over time. This can provide us with some assumptions for what the future might hold, as I will dedicate a few sentences to in the very end of the thesis. Methodologically, if an explanation applied to a certain action or situation fails in order to predict the same action or situation on a different time, it is not a good enough explanation Østerud ones said (Østerud, 2010). As I will demonstrate, historical analysis together with text analysis will offer a theoretical approach towards Russia and NATO’s cooperation over the last twenty years, and offer a thorough insight to how they may act in similar situations in the near future, hence it is possible to generalize over time. This is valuable because if there is an understanding of which factors that created cooperation problems in the past or today; it will be easier to

understand what could be done internally in Russia and NATO in the near future in order to bring the two closer to a normative partnership, if that is what they desire. When it comes to the critique against text analysis being too subjective, I will argue that this is possible to avoid with a standardized system for how to approach the text, and how to handle the data. When analyzing official documents I will use the definitions mentioned in the theoretical framework and stick to these definitions in order to categories; as a rational response in order to secure national security; or a disagreement based on social, cultural or value differences. This will further be structured by the categorization of goals versus means, where goals are *what* they see as most favorable in order to get national security and means are *how* they act in order to get national security, in addition to realism terms versus constructivist terms. The final decisions will still be of a subjective character, which is an unavoidable weakness in this kind of research.



### 3 NATO-Russia 1991-2010

*“Just like a wave on the seashore, sometimes it’s getting better, sometimes it’s getting worse”!*

NATO official (Pouliot, 2010, p. 113)

This section aims to structure the important historical events that have impacted the partnership between Russia and NATO after 1991. As Pouliot acknowledges, peace is more than just non-war; it is self-evident diplomacy (2010, p. 42). The number of new channels for diplomacy has been an important variable in the post-Cold War peace between Russia and NATO. This historical outline will present diplomatic ups and downs. A theoretical explanation will be applied to each event in order to see whether a realist or a constructivist approach offers the most appropriate explanation as to why Russia and NATO do not manage to reach a normative partnership. These conclusions will hence be an integrated part of my analysis. In accordance with Thorun (2009) and Smith (2006) I divide the period after 1991 to 2007 into four phases. I will also include a last time period from 2008 and until 2010. The first time phase goes from the time right after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, from 1991 to the turning point in 1993/94. The second time phase is delimited to the somewhat more ambiguous phase in Russian politics from 1993/94 and throughout the Yeltsin era until Vladimir Putin’s inauguration in 2000. Following this, the third phase will cover the first period of Putin’s presidency from 2000 to 2004. The fourth phase will describe the more troubled times during Putin’s second term from 2004 to 2007. In addition to this I will add a contemporary phase stretching from 2008 when Medvedev was elected president, and until NATO laid out their new strategic concept in 2010.

#### 3.1 Identity crisis and honeymoon 1991-1993/94

The first years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia was facing an identity crisis. Russia was still a great military power by heart, but it was no longer in position to balance the

West. Several Russian characteristics survived this period, and these are seen as essential in Russian security thinking (Lo, 2002; Lomagin, 2005), even today. The fear of the alien and the threat they may pose is a rational fear taken the Russian history into consideration. The insatiable desire for security both against internal threats but more importantly external threats have made the Russian state almost paranoid when it comes to security. On the other side Russia also inherited the feeling of superiority or the notion of being a great power and a regional hegemony. Since 1922, Moscow had been the center of a huge empire, and the Soviet Union enjoyed a privileged position on the international stage (Pouliot, 2010, p. 175). The nuclear arsenal and the permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council secured this position. In addition, the geographical, economical, and political strength over such an extensive time period caused the 'Great Power habitus' to become one of the most solid parts of the Russian identity (Pouliot, 2010, p. 175). Still, despite the Russian elite's modern-style democracy image, Russia did suffer from a lack of a democratic tradition. A rather autocratic state orientation where the tradition of servitude to the state (Haas, 2010, p. 3) was seen as more valuable than the power of the individual. The mental factor of the collapse of the Soviet Union should therefore not be underestimated, as it is the driver for subsequent security thinking conducted after 1991 (Haas, 2010, p. 3). And as the majority of the Russian military and political elite was educated within the Soviet ideology, and because they remained in their positions after the dissolution of the union, this is a reasonable understanding of the characteristics of Russia in the 1990s. Firstly, I will list the main aspects of Russian foreign policy thinking between 1991 and 1993/94. Secondly, I will list NATO's main priorities during the same period. In the end I will sum up main findings and explain how they are to be explained.

## **Western orientation**

After the Soviet Union dissolved, Russia experienced a much more Western-oriented period under Boris Yeltsin, often referred to as the 'honeymoon period' (Smith, 2006, p. 51). Andrey Kozyrev, Yeltsin's foreign minister from November 1990, was an 'atlanticist', and in favor of making good relations with the West (Sakwa, 2008). During this time, Moscow aligned with the West indicating that they were positive to the idea of a future partnership with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (Thorun, 2009). After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Russian leadership, with former president Yeltsin in front, emphasized that Russia now was a democratic and anti-communist country sharing many of the Western political ideas and

values (Thorun, 2009). This had an important impact on Russia's international status, since Russia was no longer seen as an enemy due to their ideology. However, according to Smith (2006) both Russian and Western analysts downplayed the seriousness in Russia actually joining the alliance.

What kept Russia from seeking partnership with NATO during this first period was what Sakwa has called a 'domesticated' period (Sakwa, 2008, p. 365), which means that Moscow was prioritizing domestic policy before global ambitions. The Russian economy was crushed, and there was no possible way Russia could challenge NATO. Partnership with NATO would therefore benefit Russia; in accordance with the well-known phrase 'if you can't beat them, join them'. This also coincides with de Haas' arguments. He says that the development of Russia's first national security policy illustrates a realistic perception in considering the non-military, internal social-economic situation as the biggest threat to the Russian Federation during the beginning of the 1990s (Haas, 2010, p. 6). External security threats were therefore not seen as immediate as internal security threats. However, external threats may appear when you least expect it, and a security alliance with the West was crucial in order to compensate for this security-vacuum-situation. Already in December 1991, Boris Yeltsin writes in a letter to the Secretary General of NATO that Russia wish to develop a dialogue "both on the political and military levels" (Adomeit, 2009, p. 100). The fact that NATO was reorganizing their alliance from a defense organization to a security community also made the Russians more supportive of the organization (Pouliot, 2010, p. 158). As the threat now was supposed to lie outside both the Alliance territory and Russia's, a common security community would therefore benefit both.

The domestic situation in Russia worsened during the first half of the 1990s. Because of the enormous spending on military budgets throughout the Cold War, Russia became dependent on the Western market to reestablish their economy and make it grow again. This economical dependency stimulated Russia's relations with Western actors. It could therefore be argued that the Russian Federations positive attitude towards NATO and the West during this first period was caused by political and economical *need* more than *want*. In addition to this, NATO drastically narrowed the Russian policy-makers political freedom internationally due to their strong position after the Cold War (Pouliot, 2010, p. 150). As the only major security

actor in Europe, and the world, NATO was given an opportunity to change the rules of security on the international arena without any other states being in position to confront it (Pouliot, 2010, p. 153). Pouliot therefore refers to NATO at this time as an ‘island of stability’ during the structural shifts in Europe (Pouliot, 2010, p. 153). The Russian Federation’s national interest was therefore to improve their relations with NATO, because of the growing need for investment, trade, and security.

### **Russian national security – picking up the pieces**

The Soviet Union did not let go of its extensive territory without a fight. However, when the revolutions broke out during the last months of 1989 (Sakwa, 2008, p. 14) and the communist states started to fall like dominos, there was no way back for the Soviet empire. More than five million square kilometers of territory was lost, pushing the Russian territory further into the east. The combination of the extensive loss of territory and the difficulties they faced securing what was left of their territory made border security important. NATO membership could help secure Russian territory against external threats, but at the same time it could also jeopardize the Russian control of internal affairs within the Russian state. When NATO started expanding eastwards, inviting former Warsaw Pact states to join the Alliance, Russia reacted very negatively. The fear of having such a strong security alliance increasingly close to its borders, in addition to such a strong competition against the ‘Russian way’, intimidated Russian political leaders. Would NATO secure Russia or take out Russia? NATO’s concept shows that some hostility between Russia and NATO was still apparent. First of all, in the Alliance’s concept from 1991 they claim that NATO’s enduring purpose is to “preserve the strategic balance within Europe” (The Alliance's New Strategic Concept, 1991). This indicates that NATO still sees it as their job to balance Russia. Despite the Russian military and economical defeat, Russia still was in possession of nuclear weapons and posed a potential threat to the Alliance. Russia on their side saw a need for balancing back, and an enlargement of NATO would make this more difficult. It is also important to note that there were almost 25 million ethnic Russians that ended up ‘on the wrong side of the border’ after the break-up of the Soviet Union (Adomeit, 2009, p. 47). These Russians have ever since been part of Russia’s security strategy, and are several times mentioned in the foreign policy concepts in Russia. This also contributes to Russia’s notion of having special interests in the Russian near abroad, and, as a consequence, a negative attitude towards NATO enlargement.

## **Normal great power**

What is eminent about this period is the lack of a Russian identity apart from what was inherited from the Soviet era. Despite the total economical and military defeat, Russia did not reconsider their Soviet image as a regional hegemony and a respected political actor. Russia still stressed that they were a great power, only now it was not because of their geopolitical or military capacity, but because of their historical, social and cultural position (Thorun, 2009, p. 33). This has often been referred to as the shift towards a 'normal great power'. From a historical and geopolitical perspective, Russia is and has always been unique. This is what constructivists stress when they say that Russia is more than 'just another state in the near abroad'. The relations with the European market were necessary for Russian in order to secure the domestic economical growth and in turn their national security. Some have argued (see the debate in Thorun, 2009, pp. 2-3) that this period rather should be seen as an idealistic one, influenced by Michael Gorbachev's New Thinking during the last period of the Soviet Union existence. However, the apparent lack of options due to economical and military defeat questions this argument, as the Russian Federation had few alternatives besides turning to the West if they were to rebuild their greatness as a state. This however does not mean that there were no idealistic forces towards integrating with NATO and the West. It just does not fit as an explanation for the whole period.

In addition to the economical perspective, the military perspective may also be explained realistically. The debate on whether or not the international world is anarchic is too broad to include here, but officially there is no hierarchy in the world today. Still, there is a dividing line between two groups of states; state powers with nuclear weapons, and those without nuclear weapons. Even though no state has the right to demand certain actions from another state, nuclear weapons have proved to be the ace up the sleeve in international conflicts, and it does give a number of benefits. If Russia had not inherited the nuclear arsenal belonging to the Soviet Union, their positioning on the world stage and their demands towards NATO would probably been severely different. Russia's position as a nuclear power made it possible to continue a bargain with NATO. As a result, the principle of equality, to be seen as an equal partner and nothing less, was still a demand in Moscow. This tactical approach towards NATO caused by the need for security and economical growth shows how Russia behaved in

accordance with realism theory. The power-maximization in terms of engaging with the West whenever that could result in more security and power within Russia confirms this.

### **NATO – still balancing power**

During the Cold War the allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization never felt the need for a visionary grand strategy on paper, since this mission was given in the Western post-World War II mentality. NATO was mostly driven on a mission-to mission basis (Aybet, 2010, p. 35), and the focus was on exporting the Western values of democracy, good governance, free and open market economies and human rights (Aybet, 2010, p. 37) to Eastern Europe and the former Soviet states. The lack of such a vision made it difficult after the end of the Cold War. Without a common enemy, the ties between the member states weakened. As a result, NATO was forced to reconsider their strategy, and they did so with the release of a strategic concept 1991. This was a rather dull prolongation of the original concept from 1949, using the word *European Identity* as a way of describing the appreciated identity of all member states, and the spreading of this as a main goal. This is visible in the 1991 concept's first page, where it states that former adversaries of NATO had now "rejected hostility to the West". Russia is not seen as an immediate military threat, but Russia, as the Soviet successor, still poses a threat to what NATO call the European identity. Yet, despite the fact that the risk of a surprise attacks from the East was seen as substantially reduced, the concept still discusses the case of the former Soviet Union as a potential area of instability and breeding for failing states. The security concept from 1991 therefore acknowledge that "security risks are not likely to come from calculated aggression, but from instability due to economical, social, and political difficulties" (The Alliance's New Strategic Concept, 1991). With the severe economical and social problems in Russia, it is safe to say that Russia was one of the states NATO had in mind.

### **NATO turns towards Russia**

NATO feared that the former Soviet republics would remain failing states, causing instability and, potentially, wars within the area. This is from a realist point of view a threat to NATO member states national security. Therefore, the idea of stronger cooperation with the Eastern European states and Russia was discussed as a way of preventing these states from failing. It might therefore be argued that NATO's engagement in the east at this time was motivated by a preventive matter, as they saw the possibility of gaining control and security within the area.

This has to be seen in accordance with the structural change that took place in NATO after 1991. Nevertheless, when NATO started their first diplomatic relations towards Russia, this was not in an attempt to integrate Russia in the Alliance. Russia and NATO was still way too far apart politically. If Russia had been ready to give in to NATO's values and norms entirely, and settled with the same kind of partnership agreement as the Baltic States later did, the partnership process could have started at this point. However, the Russian demand for being seen as an equal partner to especially the U.S. made it difficult to agree on the terms. As a compromise, formal relations between Russia and NATO were established within the North Atlantic Cooperation Council. This council was meant as a forum for discussions and consultations with the former Soviet republics in Eastern Europe on matters of common interest. Nevertheless, when the enlargement issue suddenly broke open during the summer of 1993, the Russia-NATO relationship was heading for a rough path.

### **NATO's new role in the 'new Europe'**

In the Alliance's security concept from 1991 it is stated that the "Alliance security must also take account of the global context". From being a traditional security organization, NATO started on a transformation into a security-oriented community. Still, the concept reveals, "none of its weapons will ever be used except in self-defense". This must be interpreted as an ambivalent attitude towards the global development of the Alliance. At one side, several American scholars and politicians agreed that "NATO must either go 'out of area' or it will go out of business" (Pouliot, 2010, p. 155). Due to the low security threat against the Alliance's territory, NATO now has the capacity to engage outside its own territory in order to ensure peace and stability in the near abroad. On the other hand, no aggression were to be used unless in self-defense, meaning that NATO would only go out of area in order to defend its own territory.

### **Discussion**

During the Cold War, Russia and NATO were enemies, and all means used by Russia and NATO when dealing with their relations was military. Both Russia's and NATO's doctrines heavily relied upon this approach (Pouliot, 2010, p. 150). Still, they had some cooperation whenever it was a zero-sum game. According to the partnership definitions laid out by Martin Smith, this period could be characterized as a pragmatic partnership between Russia and NATO. The period is more or less a continuation of the partnership that was already

developed during the Cold War. Both parties were willing to engage when it was mutually beneficial, and the main concern was the protection of own security interests (Smith, 2006, p. 112). The Russian interest in diplomatic engagements with NATO was mainly a result of a defeated Moscow's willingness due to the *need*. It was a result of low military capacity and poor security. This indicates an attempt to maximize the Russian benefits. What position Russia takes towards NATO may therefore depends on how much power Kremlin is in possession of. Realists therefore argue that Russia's national interest in cooperation with the West shaped the first decade after the end of the Cold War (Thorun, 2009, p. 3). The newly formed Russian state was dependent on Western investment capital, trade, technology, and entrepreneurial expertise from the more modernized and developed western world (Thorun, 2009, p. 3). In other words, the weak position after years on their knees and the political and economical upheavals in the 1990s forced Russia into a more Western oriented position.

Military-wise this is even more so as the Russian Federation had difficulties gathering a sufficient military on their own, at least on the level needed to fully secure its interest against external threats. It could also be argued that the positive attitude towards NATO was motivated by a zeal for being part of the new world community and to play by the new rules of this international policy game (Pouliot, 2010). However, as Sakwa (2008) notes, the need for political focus on internal affairs made the Russian capability to handle external affairs weaker. Russia was therefore not so much engaged in international affairs, but saw the need for allies in Europe and the near abroad. Either way, the demand for still being regarded as a great power, and therefore be included as an equal and important member state shows how Russia wanted this at a minimal costs, i.e. they were not ready to give up any sovereignty or control in return for the security and stability NATO could offer. This, I will argue, indicates that Russia was a rational actor, concerned about their national interest and power maximization, hence a realist explanation.

The only problem with this conclusion is the realist theory quest for a 'rational actor'. Was Moscow a rational actor at this time, or was the Russian state on its knees to the point where it was not at all to be considered rational? Realist scholars portray Russia as an essentially rational actor that behaves strategically to maximize its relative power position (Thorun, 2009, p. 4). This again could imply that the political ideology in Russian foreign policy has



been constant, while the changes in the ties with the West is due to changes in Russia's power position. At the same time, what is powerful depends on the circumstances (Taylor 1978:135), therefore it is difficult to decide if it is the political ideas or beliefs that changes, or their political position. Constructivists argue that states are no more rational than the sum of the people in the political elite. And the information they have is mostly based on the foreign intelligence the states are able to gather. What shaped the Russian view on NATO was based on the information Russia had at that particular time on what NATO planned for Europe and the post Warsaw Pact states. And like any other state, Russia may not always seem rational in their decisions, but this may very well stem from incorrect or uncompleted information about their surroundings. However, the decisions made in Russian foreign affairs after 1991 must be seen as logical and dispassionate, and last but not least necessary in order to maintain security over what was left of the Russian territory. The fact that Russia did not change their Soviet heritage, but rather stayed firm on their demands shows that Russia had knowledge about their options, and chose what they believed gave more security.

The fact that NATO to some extent was still balancing Russia indicates that there still was a lack of trust. Even though NATO no longer considered Russia to be a threat, there was no common 'we-ness' developed. However, this was not what caused the lack of partnership agreement. Still, the growing discontent with NATO's engagements in Eastern Europe was a result of clashing interests. While Russia wanted to maintain their position as a regional hegemony and hence be in control of this area, NATO saw Russian interference as a threat to peace and stability due to the Russian engagements in the past. Russia was concerned about the ethnic Russians living in the area, but this did not have any impact on NATO's policies towards the Baltic. There is a clear difference in political values and a total lack of common political goals, but this is not the main reason why the partnership does not develop. The partnership is on a standstill because NATO still feels the need to balance Russia due to a fear of Russia's capabilities. The North Atlantic Cooperation Council is however a step towards a more integrated relationship.

To sum up this section I will argue that the Russia-NATO relationship during this period, stretching from the emergence of Russia and up until 1993/94 did not evolve into a normative one because of events explained by realism theory. Russia is a rational actor that first and

foremost is concerned about the nation's security. The western-orientation is motivated by a need more than want, and the adoption of Western values is part of this need for entry on the European market. As the West now had monopoly in the value debate, Russia could either fit in or oppose. Kremlin was not in a position to choose the latter one. Still, Moscow was determent not to give up any of the Russian control or sovereignty. Moscow wanted to enter Europe with as little loss and as much gain as possible in order to maximize its own strength. This is particularly evident in the 'great power' tradition and the focus on state border security. It might therefore be correct that the Russian Federation had a positive approach to NATO during this time because they saw clear benefit to Russia's national security a peaceful relation between the two would give. Also, during this period all cooperation mentioned is 'military', 'politically' or 'economically'. Never is there any talk about cooperation on norms for how to conduct policy, or share of values. There differences in culture and norms are never questioned. However, the focus is seemingly throughout the period on security balance, and whether they could trust each other more now, after the end of the Cold War. And the answer to that is that the level of trust is higher, but not high enough. Nevertheless, even at the height of the Russian-NATO honeymoon there was an undercurrent of tension that remained largely latent (Smith, 2006). The increasingly tense situation in former Yugoslavia and the growing debate on enlargement within NATO soon put an end to the growing diplomacy between Russia and NATO. Especially the great power habitus in Russia became an important obstacle for the NATO-Russia diplomacy, and even more so when dealing with the two most important issues during this time period: the Kosovo crisis and the enlargement debate.

## **3.2 Revival and deterioration – 1993/94-2000**

According to de Haas (Haas, 2010) the pragmatic school of thought continued to dominate within Russia throughout the 1990s (Haas, 2010, p. 7). From the Russian constitution was signed in 1993 and throughout Yeltsin's presidency, Russian foreign policy became a lot more confident as it established a more stable and secure economy and domestic policy (Sakwa, 2008). Russia was able to balance domestic and foreign policy, and managed to make room for more global engagement. One of the major developments during this time period

was the establishment of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. Then the Kosovo war made the newly gained partnership agreement fade, as Russia and NATO barked together in a massive interest struggle. This, together with more NATO enlargement debates forced the 'honeymoon' to an end. Each of these occurrences will now be discussed in order to explain what impact they had on the partnership development.

*"Today the country has no enemies, but neither does it have reliable allies capable of and prepared to render support in trying times"*

(Rogov 1993, in Sakwa, 2008, p. 376).

### **Partnership agreement**

The first partnership initiative was taken in 1993, and set the scene for fruitful conversations between the Russian government and the NATO member states. The year after, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June 1994, Russia signed the Partnership for Peace (PfP) agreement under the motto "No vetoes, no surprises" (Smith, 2006, p. 62). In this laid an agreement that Russia would receive only a limited membership without any right to veto decisions. In return, NATO agreed not to take any drastic actions or make major decisions without consulting with the Russian government. PfP was an umbrella term that covered military contact and cooperation activities between NATO member states and non-member states in Europe (Smith, 2006, p. 57). Several of the PfP's objectives were in line with the internal mode of pursuing security, transparency, defense planning, and military developments in order to prepare states for a closer relationship with the alliance. According to Smith (Smith, 2006) it was a concern among NATO member states that Russia would get power to veto major security decisions. This was seen as a potential threat to the decision-making processes within the alliance. It has also been argued that Russia signed this agreement because they saw this as an alternative to NATO enlargement in the east (Smith, 2006), but it was still the first step towards a strategic partnership between the former rivals. And at the 1997 NATO summit in Paris, Russia and the member states in the Alliance signed the NATO-Russia Founding Act on Mutual relations, Cooperation and Security. This established the Permanent Joint Council (PJC). Nevertheless, even though Moscow agreed with and signed the PfP-program and the PJC, Yeltsin added to the chorus of Russian officials that claimed "by virtue of its scope and substance" Russia deserves a partnership with NATO "different from relationships with other

countries” (Yeltsin cited in Pouliot, 2010, p. 183). Despite the Russian notion of being in a special position, the final agreement stated that Russia was to play the junior partner as for this stage, something that has proven more difficult after the millennium.

### **The end of glory – Kosovo**

The year 1994 marks a drastic turning point in the security relations between NATO and Russia (Pouliot, 2010, p. 161). At this point, NATO and Russia progressively embarked in symbolic power struggles that to some degree still continue today. NATO re-oriented and re-tooled itself significantly in order to meet the new post-Cold War security challenges (Smith, 2006, p. 27). Smith (2006, pp. 27-31) divides the main areas of attention into four main points. First of all, they discussed the need for a rebalancing of the relations between member states as new states from the east was considered to become members. The original members feared that it would be impossible to reach consensus-based decisions as new members signed up. Second, the Allied discussed the relations between NATO and non-member states as part of their external adaption. Here, five out of four elements agreed on was directly relevant to the case of Russia. This shows how Russia already in the mid-1990s had enormous attention within NATO. The third area of restructuring was peace support, which became increasingly important after the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the civil war in Bosnia. This was a new task for NATO, raising new questions within Russia. In addition came the fourth and last point, namely the growing involvement in crisis management and crisis response operations. The last one would soon prove to be a difficult area to agree on.

The first major crisis occurred when in March 1999, NATO-members launched Operation Allied Force against the Serbs in Kosovo. This created new challenges for the Russia-NATO relationship, and proved once again that there is a difference in values and interests separating the two. NATO decided to put an end to ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia, launching a 78-days long air campaign in Kosovo in March 1999. The goal was to bring Slobodan Milosevic’s crimes towards the people to an end. However, the Russian political and military elite interpreted the intervention differently. They saw this as a clear confirmation of the Alliance’s aggressive design (Godzimirski, 2005). NATO launched their operation in Kosovo without seeking mandate from the UN Security Council. This severely challenged the alliance’s relations with Russia. The Russian political elite is a firm believer in the UN as

main actor in international affairs. The political elite in Moscow has always strived to maintain a good reputation in the United Nations, because this is a forum where Russia does enjoy special privileges as permanent member with the right to veto. This, according to Smith, confirms to Russia that the alliance stand ready to use military power coercively and in peace support purposes when dealing with non-Article Five operations (Smith, 2006, p. 30). Disputes over the decision to use military force without specific UN sanction caused the most turbulent and controversial period in Russia-NATO relations in the post Cold War period. When it became known to Russian politicians that NATO were sending aircrafts to Macedonia to conduct a military exercise on the Kosovo border, Russia recalled all their representatives in the Alliance (Pouliot, 2010, p. 196). Later that same year, Yeltsin sent a personal note to the White House in Washington saying that Russia would “not countenance”, something that was argued to go beyond disapproval and “carries with it at least the option of reprisal” (Talbot cited in Pouliot, 2010, p. 196). And while Moscow warned that they would veto all military actions in Kosovo in the UN Security Council, foreign minister Igor Ivanov also announced that “a NATO operation in Kosovo would signal the start of a new cold war” (Igor Ivanov situated in Pouliot, 2010, p. 197). The total lack of a like-minded approach to the Kosovo conflict resulted in total deterioration in Russia and NATO’s starting partnership.

In NATO it was seen as a necessary, value-driven operation under the parole of responsibility to protect (R2P). National and societal security, basic human rights, and democracy was at stake, and NATO felt the need to use military means. The political elite in Moscow viewed the intervention in Kosovo as a manifestation of an interest-driven policy of the West and a clear attempt by the West to encroach on Russia’s regional and global interests (Godzimirski, 2005, p. 58). Already after the Balkan crisis in 1994, Jim Headley, a senior lecturer at the University College in London, put it this way:

*“Russia’s shift to a realist great-power policy led to a crisis with the West as Russia sought to demonstrate its great power credentials, protect what it saw as specific Russian interests in the Balkans, and limit the role of NATO in conflict resolution, while Western leaders aimed to demonstrate NATO credibility and its new post-Cold War role as peace-keeper/peace-maker. This was the first major East-West crisis since*

*the end of the Cold War, and Russian responses and actions foreshadowed its reactions to the Kosovo crisis”.*

(Jim Headley, 2003).

Russia pleaded for equal rights to those enjoyed by NATO member states, and most of all veto right over military operations under the slogan “we’re partners, not lackeys” (Pouliot, 2010, p. 202). After Kosovo, Kremlin’s level of trust in NATO was at an absolute rock bottom. Russia feared for the integrity of the UN Security Council, its own national security and the fact that NATO was willing and capable of conducting military interventions without any UN mandate. Seen in accordance with the great power notion, this is a rational response due to Russia’s principle of “sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference as key rules of the international security game” (Pouliot, 2010, p. 207).

### **Interests on collision course**

The second occurrence that caused the conflict level to rise was the new direction in NATO on the topic of enlargement. The relationship between Russia and NATO was at this point at its absolute worst in the post-Soviet era, but it cooled down to freezing point as NATO only a few months later, in March 1999 opened their door to three former Warsaw Pact states; Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary. While this by NATO is referred to as an enlargement of their area of cooperation, the Russian Federation officially refers to it as an expansion, which adds a much more aggressive understanding of the issue. Not only did the NATO now engage in out of area operations without any defined geographical limits to their interference, but they also wanted to expand their core area (Pouliot, 2010, p. 208). Supporters of enlargement presented this as if it was a matter of survival for NATO (Pouliot, 2010, p. 164). In order to survive as a security organization, NATO benefitted from the enlargement because it incorporated areas of instability and uncertainty and ‘Europeanized’ the area with the core values within NATO. Russia on the other hand did not welcome this at all. Clinton had promised Yeltsin that enlargement would be guided by three ‘noes’: no surprises, no rush, and no exclusion (Pouliot, 2010, p. 167). From a Russian point of view the enlargement plans issued in 1999 was a violation of all the three ‘noes’. First of all, it came as a surprise, since Russia believed that the PfP agreement were to function as an alternative to enlargement. Secondly, NATO, at least the way Moscow saw it, rushed into it without consulting any of the Russian officials, excluded Moscow from the diplomatic discussion on the topic and from the

further development of their relationship with the east. Former minister of foreign affairs Andrey Kozyrev stated that for Russia the issue of enlargement reflected a NATO pattern of offering “Russia a fait accompli, a final position of the ‘take it or leave it’ type” (Kozyrev cited in Pouliot, 2010). For the Russians, this meant total exclusion and humiliation (Pouliot, 2010), and an impossible situation to make coincide with the Russian ‘great power’ notion. Third, for Moscow it also meant having a powerful but also foreign security alliance increasingly closer to its borders. The Russian reactions reveal this discontent:

*“I do not think NATO is expanding to start a war, but it is becoming a military alliance whose power cannot be matched by anybody. We fear that as it gains strength and moves closer to Russian borders, NATO will try to impose on us its conditions – political, economic and others”.*

Defense minister Igor Rodionov  
cited in (Pouliot, 2010, p. 171)

Still, there was never generated any massive attack on NATO in the aftermath of this enlargement. Possibly, this had to do with an exhausted Russian federation led by an even more exhausted president Boris Yeltsin. He neither had the interest or the capability to use force against NATO. However, then president of the United States, Bill Clinton, went out warning Central European leaders against pressing for “immediate membership”, risking more tension between the new partners of NATO and Russia (Smith, 2006, p. 63). Clinton believed that a rapid NATO enlargement in the east would stagnate the increasingly good relationship with Russia, and as a result cause less security and stability in the region. Moscow agreed to this, claiming that enlargement would create new dividing lines in Europe (Pouliot, 2010, p. 171). The enlargement debate was discussed in terms of power, control, military threats and instability. Russia did not say that the enlargement was a threat to Russian identity or the Russian values for how to interfere in neighboring states. Russia wanted the exact same thing as NATO: control and stability in the former Soviet Union federations. However, while NATO saw this area as a threat to stability if they were not incorporated into the Alliance, Russia considered it a threat that NATO did move into this region. The goal, peace, was agreed upon, but they did not agree who was entitled to be in charge. With the

self-image of being a regional hegemony, this was from a Russian perspective a threat to national security.

### **NATO towards a new strategy**

NATO's concept implemented in 1999 express a different view on the case of Russia than the one from 1991. In 1991, NATO acknowledged that the communist era was over, but they were still skeptical about the situation in Russia and former Soviet Union federations. The concept in 1999, on the other side, is more open to mutual cooperation and also the possibility of a future partnership. The East-West division is no longer so apparent, and NATO decides to increase "political and military partnership, cooperation and dialogue with other states, including Russia". In addition to this, it also says "Russia and NATO have committed themselves to develop their relations on the basis of common interest, reciprocity and transparency to achieve a lasting and inclusive peace in the Euro-Atlantic area" (The Alliance's Strategic Concept, 1999). This indicates a want for a strategic partnership because of the quest for common interest, reciprocity and transparency. However, this did not turn out to work as well in practice as it does on paper. Already shortly after this concept was released, the situation changed again. This time, the massive terrorist attack in New York on September 11 outdated the concept even before it has been taken into full consideration. This, I will come back to in the next period.

### **Discussion**

During the first years of this period, the partnership between Russia and NATO was still pragmatic, despite the slow development towards more diplomacy and cooperation. With the PfP-agreement in 1994 and the PJC in 1997 the partnership process headed towards a more strategic partnership, though only on paper. The real relationship was still far from a strategic one. As in the former period, the aspect of military and economical weakness shaped much of Russia's positive attitude towards the Alliance. Still, while the preceding period was characterized by a number of military and economical perspectives, this period was increasingly about cultural differences, value conflicts and colliding interests. Firstly, we can see this in the case of Kosovo. The growing NATO engagement in peace-support and crisis management divided Russia and NATO. The disagreement at the time was not over Kosovo as such, but rather the way the Kosovo-case as a situation was handled within NATO. Since NATO was afraid Russia would veto all resolutions on Kosovo operations in the UN Security



Council, the Kosovo crisis was dealt with within NATO instead. This, the Russian authorities opposed. The conflict was therefore not concentrated around national interest or power maximization, but rather whether NATO had a legal right to interfere. While NATO is confident that intervening is the right thing to do, and refers to the importance of humanitarian security and responsibility to protect, Russia on their side see this as an act of muscle flexing. Russia has strong principles on non-interference, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russia also disagreed strongly when NATO conducted their air strike without a UN-mandate. NATO on the other hand, saw this as a case where a UN-mandate was unnecessary due to the high level of violence and human suffering. It is also important to keep in mind the differences between NATO being a liberal democracy and the Russian Federation being an illiberal democracy. While NATO was determent to stop any violations towards human security, Russia was more concerned about state security issues. Kosovo was a civil war and did not pose a risk to state security.

Secondly, we see a clear divide in interest in NATO's enlargement debate in the former Soviet federations. While NATO considered these states as a potential threat to European stability if they were not included as partners in NATO and regarded it as a diplomatic gesture to the states invited, Russia saw the enlargement as a threat to their own security if NATO expanded closer towards the Russian border. Russia also used uses the slightly more aggressive word 'expansion', emphasizing the negative view towards the whole discussion. They did not want to see NATO in possession of political and military dominance in Europe. In the case of enlargement, border security, power-maximization, and mutual threats were key stands out as motive for the assertive position taken by Russia. This is realism terms. When it comes to the Kosovo war however, the debate was over Western versus Russian values. It was not a question of state security, but rather the norms for how to act in interaction with other states, and who should have the right to intervene in other states and under what circumstances. This points to a constructivism approach, as the partnership deteriorates because of a total lack of common understanding of the international environment, proper political actions, and shared values.

Thirdly, the PfP-agreement signed in 1994 shows a major step towards a closer partnership, as it brought the two closer together, and increased the level of diplomacy. This indicates a

stronger focus on diplomatic means rather than military means. However, this agreement focused on military cooperation, and not on sharing of values and creating a common 'we-ness'. The PfP was also an asymmetrical agreement, as Russia was considered junior partner without any special rights manifested in the agreement. The PJC was also mainly build on a *realpolitik* as most of the cases that was discussed was military planning, disarmament, peacekeeping and defense-related issues (see e.g. NATO handbook, 2002). Still, the signing of these agreements showed a growing global engagement within the Russian government. The motto 'no vetoes – no surprises' also shows how Russia and NATO was able to agree on a set of common norms for their future foreign policy, even though it was difficult to live up to. The PfP-agreement ensured Russia access to more information, and more mutual exchange of each other's political perspectives within the framework of the Alliance that potentially could have a direct impact on the Russian state and its near abroad.

From a realist point of view, the PfP-agreement is in Russia's best interest because it increases Russian control over the situation in the east. Signing the agreement was the first step towards a future partnership, and increased Russian cooperation with Europe. The strong Russian reaction to NATO enlargement is also possible to explain in terms of realism theory, since it from a Russian perspective is a potential threat towards Russia's national security. The enlargement debate will most likely continue, and this is an absolute incompatible conflict. The different way of interpreting the situation in Kosovo and the different traditions for how to solve such matters in general also turned out to create major difficulties. It could therefore be argued that the diplomatic problems when dealing with security issues during this period of time are due to differences in democratic values and norms for how to conduct security policy. Still, the overall tendency during these years are best described by *realpolitik*, hence a realism explanation.

To sum up, both realism and constructivism offers elements of explanation for why a normative partnership was not developed during this period. The total lack of a common 'we-ness' is obvious, and this is an important factor why the relationship deteriorates. The case of Kosovo was a problem due to different moral and ideological approaches to the internal affairs, and calls for a constructivism explanation. However the partnership does also suffer due to *realpolitik*. The enlargement debate is an example of this. While the internal political

conflicts between NATO and Russia were dominated by questions about national security, e.g. border security; most external crisis outside the NATO-Russia territory caused problems because of scattered political interests and understandings of the world community and how to respond to certain international situations. The great power notion within NATO also demanded more legal rights within NATO than the Alliance's member states were willing to accept. This was due to the member state's fear of not letting Russia get a too strong grip around the alliance. This is best explained with realism theory, which claims that states always put their own national interest first, and see collaboration as a zero-sum game. Still, Kosovo stands out as the most important factor why Russia and NATO do not develop their partnership; hence a constructivism approach offers the best explanation why Russia and NATO do not move forward.

### **3.3 Hard Security and Soft Cooperation – 2000-2004**

After Kosovo, the great power disposition grew even stronger in Russia, despite the moderate military and economical strength they possessed compared to NATO (Pouliot, 2010, p. 194). Another factor that shaped this period was the presidential inauguration of Vladimir Putin. On the 31 of December, during the millennium celebration, president Boris Yeltsin announced that he resigned with immediate effect. He appointed the Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin, as president, and thus gave Putin a head start before the presidential election later that same year. Two events in particular would soon become the most memorable occurrences during Putin's first presidential period. These were the terrorist attacks against New York on 11 September 2001 and the Iraqi crisis in 2002-2003 (Smith, 2006, p. 89) which shifted the foreign security policy back to 'hard security'. In the period between the presidential nomination in December 1999 and the New York terrorist attacks, president Putin was sending rather confusing signals on his intentions towards cooperation with NATO (Godzimirski, 2005, p. 67). The revised Military Doctrine signed by president Putin in 2000 held an assertive attitude towards the West in general, as well as an emphasis on military means as an instrument of security policy. NATO's wish for further enlargement in the East in addition to NATO's use of force in former Yugoslavia was from a Russian perspective seen as a clear example of NATO's policy of ignoring Russia as a great power (Haas, 2010, p. 17). With the new president and a boosted

economy, Russia was now determined to make a comeback as a great power, and established a far greater foreign policy engagement.

### **Return to *real-politics***

Ten years into the post-Cold War world of international relations, yet another important shift in the security environment occurs. With the terrorist attacks in New York 11 September 2001, global terrorism becomes main priority on the security agenda. According to the story told, Vladimir Putin was the first state leader to call in his condolences to George W. Bush after the terrorist attack became known over the world. This opened up for further conversations between the two. According to Pouliot (2010, p. 211) three main Russian dispositions became better attuned after the 11 September terrorist attacks. First, the West, and the United States in particular, went back to a rather conservative understanding of national security. This brought Russia and NATO closer together. Second, NATO, and in particular the United States, revalued *material-institutional capital* like military force and institutional ties. Or, said differently, the West returned to *realpolitik* and hard security. This was a language that Moscow could understand. Third, the aspect of national security and border security reemerged as upper most priority as a result of the attack. This is in accordance with the Russian foreign policy concept and the 'state of being' in Russian security policy. Still, this was not a quick fix to the relationship with NATO. It only contributed to a temporary 'meeting on the halfway', since Russia's dominant habitus was better adapted to a post-September 11 rules of the international game than a pre-September 11 one.

### **9/11 – Terrorism returns the agenda**

The 9/11 terrorist attacks initiated the first military cooperation between NATO and Russia. However, the actual practical military cooperation was considered too politically sensitive (Haas, 2010, p. 162). Still, it is fair to say that Russia and NATO at least operated as allies. Islamic fundamentalism under the organization of al-Qaeda was a threat to both. Russia had already prior to 9/11 stated that they would prioritize the fight against Islamic fundamentalism from Chechnya and Dagestan. In addition to the fear of new terrorist attacks, Russia also struggled with the drug-flow coming from Afghanistan, which is believed to be funding terrorist activity (Haas, 2010, p. 162). At this point, NATO had no norms for cooperation with Russia in international operations, but they managed to put in place an agreement that granted

NATO the right to transport goods for the ISAF operation in Afghanistan through Russian territory (Haas, 2010, p. 162). The Operation Active Endeavour was the first military-to-military-cooperation between Russia and NATO, where intelligence sharing was one of the examples of success. This was a huge step for Russia-NATO cooperation, and they managed to keep the agreement in place despite other political disagreements that occurred during this time.

In 2002 and 2004, Russia experienced two major terrorist attacks carried out on their own soil by Chechen extremists. The first one, known as the *Nord-Ost Siege* took place between the 23 and 26 October 2002 as Chechen extremists took hostages in one of the theatres in Moscow. The second attack took place between 1 and 3 September, at a school in Beslan, North Ossetia. Kremlin was not in possession of a sufficient legal system that could live up to the demands of a necessary anti-terrorist operation. In the aftermath of Beslan, changes to the security policy documents were announced (Haas, 2010, pp. 18-19). After both of these attacks the official Russian response was that war had been declared against Russia, and that “if necessary, (preventive) attacks by Russian forces against terrorists abroad would be carried out” (Haas, 2010, p. 20). This was pretty much the same response as the American president gave to the 9/11 attacks. And even though the United Nations Security Council acknowledged the Chechen conflict as part of international terrorism, states within the Alliance disagreed (Haas, 2010). International terror is something the United States of America and the Russian Federation is able to agree on as global problem. Still, Russia and NATO do not share the same definition of ‘terror’. NATO uses the American definition, which does not include most of the terror attacks on Russian soil. Russia’s war on terror started during the fall of 1999, with the military operations in Chechnya (Beene, Jeffrey J. Kubiak, & Kyle J. Colton, 2005, p. 168), and Russian forces have taken a central role in battling international terrorism ever since. The Russian government soon made connections between violent terrorist attacks on Russian soil, mainly in the Caucasus area, and the so-called ‘international terrorism’, which is usually terrorist attacks defined by the United States’ government (Beene et al., 2005, p. 168).

Russia is in favor of cooperating with NATO on the issue of terrorism, but the different definition of terrorism creates problems. Russia wants the West to acknowledge that the

conflict in Chechnya is a war against international terrorism (Beene et al., 2005, p. 172). This has only been partially successful. The international community believes that Russia to some extent has to blame itself, and the way they have treated the Caucasus region and Chechnya. Some of the people that were accused for participating in various terrorist acts in Russia has therefore been given asylum in several Western states, including the United States of America and the United Kingdom (Beene et al., 2005). The definition of terrorism and further, how to categorize the Russian war against terror in Chechnya has become a sore spot in the Russian-NATO relationship.

### **Improved diplomacy**

The global war on terrorism united Russia with the West, and led to improved diplomatic relations after 9/11. One clear example of this was the NATO-Russia Council (NRC), which was established after the summit in Rome in 2002. The NRC, which replaced the Permanent Joint Council, provided a framework for consultation on current security issues and practical cooperation between Russia and NATO on areas of common interest. The declaration states “the NATO-Russia Council will serve as the principal structure and venue for advancing the relationship between NATO and Russia” (NATO-Russia Relations: A New Quality, 2002) and that all decisions will be based on consensus. The overall goal was therefore to:

*“Build together a lasting and inclusive peace in the Euro-Atlantic area on the principles of democracy and cooperative security and the principle that the security of all states in the Euro-Atlantic community is indivisible”.*

NRC declaration (NATO-Russia Relations: A New Quality, 2002).

An important aspect of the NRC is, as diplomats stressed, the importance of the ‘boring’ and ‘taken for granted’ aspects, namely the firm timetable and the regular meeting schedule that enabled the officials to meet and discuss and communicate political issues on a regular basis, forcing them to confront tough issues regularly (Pouliot, 2010, p. 117). Another result was the practical cooperation in the American-led military intervention in Afghanistan, which I will get back to.

Nevertheless, the good times later came to an end. In January 2003 the Academy of Military Science in Russia held its annual conference (Haas, 2010, p. 79). Speeches held by military scientists, Chief of the General Staff, and the Minister of Defense all indicated a continuation of the old Anti-Western tendencies (Haas, 2010, p. 79). This became even more apparent when the United States' led military invasion of Iraq started on 20 March 2003. The main issue with this invasion within the Russian political elite in Moscow, was the fact that they persistently claimed that the invasion violated the principle of state sovereignty (Pouliot, 2010, p. 219). Putin probably also feared that a strong American/NATO tradition or culture for interventions at some point could put the Russian Federation under scrutiny as well. Putin therefore opposed the use of force in Iraq when it was discussed in the UN Security Council, in addition to fronting a diplomatic campaign against the launch of air strikes against the Iraqi president Saddam Hussian (Haas, 2010, p. 79; Pouliot, 2010; Zaks, 2003). Putin also feared that a US-led invasion of Iraq would threaten to destabilize international relations in the Middle Eastern region. And he was not reassured on this matter when in early 2002, the American media leaked that Russia was amongst the even states on which nuclear weapons could or should be targeted by Pentagon's Nuclear Posture Review (Pouliot, 2010, p. 219). This was again a humiliation of Russia, and a reminder of who 'won' the Cold War. Officials in the U.S. and the United Kingdom, which led the invasion, argued that Moscow opposed the invasion because of the oil reserves in Iraq, and that the Iraqi conflict could lead to a dramatic drop in oil prices (Zaks, 2003). Putin rejected this, and stated that Russia "never based its policy towards Iraq solely on economic factors or interests" (Zaks, 2003). The main issue here was not the invasion of Iraq per se, but the way NATO played the role of the UN in addition to the total lack of respect for state sovereignty and non-interference, values that are an important part of Russia's identity. As a result, the relationship further deteriorated.

### **What does Russia's official concepts tell us?**

A comprehensive Russian security policy was not reached until the very end of the 1990s (Haas, 2010, p. 6). In the 1999 draft to the Russian National Security Concept, a rise in military threats was displayed clearly illustrating a turning point in the Russian threat perception (Haas, 2010, p. 16), and a clear turning point for Russia and NATO. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia remained rather isolated. In the article "Russia and NATO: The Taming of the Shrew", Dmitry Polikanov (2009, p. 83) writes that "Russia has no friends". However, Russia soon realized that they in today's international system were

dependent on both a stable Europe and a stable Asian continent to maintain its position as a great power. And the relations to NATO and America were of upper most importance for Russian foreign policymakers. Former President Vladimir Putin emphasized this dependency in his Foreign Policy Concept of 2000:

*“We are present in Europe, in Asia, in the North and the South. Of course we have interests there. [...] Russia should look for partners and allies everywhere: in Europe, in Asia, in Africa and in Latin America. But they should be partners and reckon with and recognize our national interest”.*

(The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2000)

The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation,  
Approved on 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2000

Putin therefore took a seemingly pro-Western stand during his first years, but not a pro-NATO one. However, despite the growing global engagement, the important aspect of global engagement in the Russian administration was towards the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). During the beginning of the 1990s, the Russian Federation believed that the CIS would develop towards an organization similar to the Soviet Union (Haas, 2010, p. 4), maintaining some of the Russian strength and control in the region. The CIS states are strategically important to Russia, especially in energy policy. NATO had a different view on this. In their strategic concept from 1999 the alliance emphasized their wish to enlarge further towards the east. This would result in an even closer border with the Russian Federation, and more control over Eastern Europe. NATO had early conversations with Armenia, Moldova, Ukraine. Russia immediately had to improve their engagement in this region in order to balance it. Yet, the enlargement continued despite Russian protests, and between 2002 and 2006, the Alliance admitted seven new member states (Pouliot, 2010, p. 208)., however not states from the CIS. Russia was no longer in charge in Eastern Europe.

According to the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, approved by president Putin on the 28. June 2000, one of the priorities in Russia is to “preserve and strengthen its sovereignty and territorial integrity” (The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation,



2000), and “to achieve firm and prestigious position in the world community, most fully consistent with the interests of the Russian Federation as a great power, and as one of the most influential centers of the modern world” (The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2000). This reveals Russia’s self-claimed return as a great power. After years of economical hardships during the Yeltsin era, Russia now experienced an economical growth and new prosperity. The result was a more pride Russian political habitus. With increased diplomatic dialogue with NATO and more engagement in international affairs, Moscow also moved closer to NATO and adopted more liberal values from the West. Still, the partnership between Russia and NATO are still not a truly strategic one. While several former Soviet Union federations during this period was being integrated as normative partners, Russia was not. Why is this so?

A normative partnership with NATO does to a certain degree collide with the Russian federations fundamental values and principles like sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference. Any violations of these principles are in Moscow often interpreted as a threat to the Russian national security. Hence, a normative partnership will, from a Russian point of view, to some degree violate Russia’s national security because it demands Russia to give up some of its national sovereignty and also cause more NATO interference in internal as well as external affairs. More transparency in domestic affairs will unavoidably decrease Russia’s ability to act independently and therefore also harms their national integrity. The aspect of security is therefore of upper most importance because it is so closely related to both the aspect of national interest and the principle of power-maximization. Putin is also worried about the trend towards “a unipolar structure of the world with the economic and power domination under the United States” (The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2000). If we look at the U.S.’ role in Iraq, this might just be what Putin is referring to in the foreign policy concept. This may again help explain the negative response to the invasion that is found among the political elite in Moscow. In a world where Russia no longer managed to balance the power of the U.S, multipolarity is considered the only way for Russia to maintain its position as a great power. And despite Putin’s growing engagement with the West in general, the concept reveals a rather negative attitude towards NATO as security organization. Putin puts it this way in his foreign policy concept:

*“[T]he intensity of cooperation with NATO will depend on its compliance with key clauses of this document, primarily those concerning non-use of threat of force, and non-deployment of conventional armed forces groupings, nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles in the territories of the new members”*

(The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2000).

The Russian plan to preserve and strengthen sovereignty and territorial integrity in order to achieve a prestigious position in the world community does not coincide with NATO's want for a common European identity with liberal and democratic values. Hence, it is clear that there is a conflict between Russia and NATO due to a difference in interests. The question is then, is this a 'social' interest or a 'security' interest? Putin is open for more cooperation with several of the Alliance's member states, just not within the framework of the Alliance. The fact that Russia cooperate better with Western states when it is not within this framework indicate that Russia has a security interest in cooperation with the West, but not any 'social' interest in being partners with NATO. This points towards a constructivism explanation. Russia is at this point not forced to cooperate with NATO, and have an increased global engagement. However, Russia is not interested in turning this into a closer partnership with NATO. This reveals tension between the former adversaries that might add diplomatic problems. Moscow is moving towards a more pro-Western stand, but does still cling to an anti-NATO one. It might also be that Russia feel the need for balancing the alliance rather than to engage with it.

### **What does NATO's official concepts tell us?**

In March 1999, the Alliance adopted a new strategic concept in order to take on the new security challenges out of area. The 'out of area' debate refers to whether NATO should be a security organization on the territory of its member states, or if it should also include territory beyond this. The debate soon subsided as it became clear to NATO that the present-day threat increasingly came from failed or failing states outside NATO's territory, posing a threat to the values of democracy, liberalism and human rights, e.g. terrorism. This contradicts Russia's strong faith in territorial sovereignty, as mentioned in Russian Foreign Security Concept. Yevgeny Primakov, Russian politician and prime minister in Russia between 1996 and 1998, stated in a press conference "we must not set a precedent in which NATO acts outside the

territory of the NATO countries without a decision by the UN Security Council” (Pouliot, 2010, p. 196). Nevertheless, after the terrorist attacks in New York in 2001, Article 5 was interpreted to include a terrorist attack on a member state (Gordon situated in Smith, 2006). Nevertheless, the fact that Russia emphasized their disapproval against the violations of the U.S.’s national security, and showed their support in the war against terrorism, made it far easier for the United States and NATO to engage in the war against terrorism in Central Asia.

NATO’s concept from 1991; which covers the foreign policy strategy for the first two time phases, and the concept from 1999; covering the last two phases, are severely different in the way they handle the case of Russia. While NATO in 1991 is relieved that the communist era is over, though still skeptical about the situation in Russia, the concept in 1999 is more open to cooperation and also some kind of partnership agreement. In 1999, the East-West division is no longer so apparent. The main issue is no longer the Russian Federation’s overall policy and existence, but rather the case of Russia as a ‘normal’ neighboring state on an issue-to-issue basis. The 1999-concept reveals that NATO want to increase “political and military partnership, cooperation and dialogue with other states, including Russia” and that “Russia and NATO have committed themselves to develop their relations on the basis of common interest, reciprocity and transparency to achieve a lasting and inclusive peace in the Euro-Atlantic area” (The Alliance's Strategic Concept, 1999).

NATO’s strategy in 1999 reveals a more positive attitude towards partnership with non-NATO states including Russia. The political and military partnership cooperation and dialogue was partly a result of the positive development with e.g. the NRC. The war against global terrorism also called for a global response, where Russia was an important resource, especially on the soft-security dimension like drug trade. Here, the common basis of interests helped the partnership to develop. However, the ‘increased reciprocity and transparency’ was not as obvious. Russia did not indicate any strong interest in increasing their transparency in foreign affairs, and the war in Iraq had set fire to some of the old anti-NATO tendencies. NATO’s out-of-area debate did not coincide with Russia’s political values, and apart from all practical cooperation in areas of common interest, there were few signs of a developing ‘we-ness’. The only sign of this was in the war against terrorism, however here, Russia was turning to the United States, and not NATO. This period therefore brought development to the

partnership situation between Russia and NATO, but only due to more well-functioning *realpolitik*. –Not due to a more developed ‘we-ness’.

## Discussion

This period takes Russia increasingly closer to a strategic partnership. This could of course be a result of few conflicts or threats directly between Russia and NATO, however there are two factors in particular that might be said to cause this to happen. Firstly, it is the emergence of large-scale global terrorism as a common external security threat, which unites the two in a common cause of interest. Secondly, it is the general shift in the West towards a more hard security military strategy, meaning that the Alliance moved closer towards Russia, and the Russian security thinking. I will discuss these two factors in the same order.

After 9/11, most international attention is on global terrorism, and the political disagreements and value struggles between Russia and the West are overshadowed. This, however, does not necessarily mean that they in general agree more now than they have done before. The reason behind the increasingly good relations is rather a result of the changing political environment. The terrorist attacks in New York marked an important shift in the Western military strategy. Hard security was back on the agenda, with the use of military means to ensure national security (Pouliot, 2010). And with this reorientation, Russia and NATO suddenly spoke the same language, and was capable of committing to a common cause: to defeat global terrorism. According to Godzimirski (2005) the global war on terrorism ascribed two important changes to the NATO-Russian relationship. Firstly, the terrorist attack increased the tension between the West and much of the Middle East. As an energy supplier, Russia benefitted from this economically, and was able to restore their economy due to increased oil prices and an energy-hungry West. Secondly, the American president George W. Bush was to a certain extent a like-minded counterpart to the Russian president Vladimir Putin. As Putin was fighting his own war on terror in Chechnya against Islamic separatists, he benefitted from the extensive American vendetta against terrorism, which both took attention away from the Russian war against Islamic separatist, as well as providing more support for the Russian reactions against terror. This gives evidence of a realism approach, where Russia’s interest in a closer cooperation with NATO is motivated by national security and self-gain.

Further, the return to hard security and focus on military means made Russia and NATO more compatible, as they now could understand each other's political language. This is eminent in the so-called war against terrorism, and especially in the Operation Active Endeavour in Afghanistan, where Russia and NATO managed to cooperate on intelligence and military activity. Nevertheless, there has been a problem between Russia and the West in order to agree on a common definition of what is supposed to be considered global terror. Even when the goal, to defeat international terrorism, was agreed upon, they did not manage to agree on common norms for how to respond to the problem, and at what cost. Russia and NATO are both willing to cooperate against terrorism, but the way they interpret terror and the definitions they use to describe it cause problems despite the common goal. Should Chechnya also be included under the term 'global terrorism'? Should the Moscow metro bombings be part of the 'global war on terrorism'? Here, Russia and NATO still reveal major disagreements. This makes it difficult to agree on a common norm for similar cooperation in the future.

In the case of the invasion of Iraq, the difference in values and norms between Russia and the West becomes even more eminent. Still, I believe that the best explanation for this particular disagreement is *realpolitik*, because of the fact that Moscow fear that NATO is building up a too strong global engagement parallel to the United Nations. The military intervention violated the Russian political norm and values of non-interference and respect for the principle of state sovereignty as the most important principle. According to the political elite in Russia, the only organization that can legitimate use force is the UN. However, president Putin could probably have done the same thing if he were in Bush's shoes, but as long as Russia is outside NATO the violation of this principle is interpreted as a threat to Russia's national security. Two important questions remains to be agreed upon in order to enhance the Russia-NATO relationship: In what cases should military power be allowed, and where should the line be drawn for where Russia and NATO respectively should be allowed to use military force. –And further, where can they agree on a common use of force? Russia has a strong non-interference policy due to their own fear of having other states intervene in Russian political affairs. Russia is also a firm believer in every states inviolable sovereignty and right to decide within one's own borders. The fact that Russia and NATO did have a military cooperation in Afghanistan, but faced severe problems in Iraq shows how their

partnership is restricted to a practical ad hoc manner, and not a general agreement on supporting each other on a broader basis.

One area where the discussion is not mainly in military terms is within the NATO-Russia Council. The NRC had an important effect on bringing Russia and NATO from a pragmatic partnership towards a more strategic one. The NRC increased the element of consensus-based decision-making, which pleased some of Moscow's demand for political equality. Here, Russia and NATO may discuss political problems and find peaceful solutions to problems that directly involve both. As constructivists emphasize, norms and values are adoptable, and may be exchanged between states when they interact. The NRC therefore may function as an arena for mutual exchange of information, norms, interests, and values, in order to increase the peaceful cooperation and the mutual understanding towards a normative partnership.

This period shows how external situations and occurrences seem to be an important variable in order to understand the changes in the Russia-NATO relationship than what the internal situations are. The war on terror and the Iraqi crisis has had more impact on the Russia-NATO relationship than what military or diplomatic disturbances directly between Russia and NATO had. This period is already characterized as a 'return to realism', and the realism approach function as an explanation for the relationship between Russia and NATO as well. The conflicts during this period of time are increasingly about national interest, and Russia is acting in accordance with the principle of power-maximization and national security rather than according to their values and normative disagreements. –The case of Iraq is the only exception, however, the value of non-interference is very closely linked to the national security aspect. As the security agenda shifts to a more pragmatic, realist and hard power strategy, Russia collaborates better with NATO because NATO also is moving closer towards the Russian way of conducting security policy. However, it is not the mutual trust or the common 'we-ness' that drives this. It is rather compatible national interests and mutual gain.

In Kosovo, Russia was left out and not taken seriously for their great power notion. This generated problems because it made Moscow fear for their own national security within an increasingly multipolar world. NATO went against several important Russian principles of

non-interference (see e.g. the The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2000), need for UN mandate, and respect for Russia's 'backyard'. This was not the case in the fight against terrorism in Afghanistan. However, it is important to note that there is an important difference between Moscow's attitudes towards the West in general versus towards NATO as a security alliance. The aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks were handled mainly by the U.S. government, and to a lesser extent NATO (Pouliot, 2010, p. 2010). And as we can see in the Russian foreign policy concept of 2000<sup>9</sup>, the U.S. is treated with a lot more benevolence than NATO is. This confirms the notion of Russia being more positive towards the EU and the U.S. than what they are when it comes to the old rival NATO.

If we look at the contents in the Russian foreign security concept from 2000 and NATO's new strategic concept from 1999, this further confirms that this period is best explained by realism theory. The NRC has moved Moscow closer towards a strategic partnership with NATO, but in the concept, 'state security' is emphasized as the primary concern in Russia. The elements of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference, all examples of *realpolitik*-concerns, is mentioned as the most important values in Russia, and they are also most important in forming Russia's policies towards NATO. One of the primary concerns within Russia is also what they see as NATO's unlimited interference outside the territory defined by article 6 in the Washington Treaty. This is a major concern for Russia, and creates a lot of tension. NATO on their side also emphasizes military cooperation as an important area of commitment with Russia. This seems more important to NATO than exchanging values and mutual transfer of political learning.

As the next period will show, the NRC is far from enough in order to keep diplomatic engagements stable between Russia and NATO. The fact that Russia sees the need for balancing NATO again, rather than becoming a part of it indicates that Moscow is starting to consider itself strong enough to compete with the Alliance. And, as I will argue, the main reason for this is Russia's increasing military and economical capacity more than the culture and value differences.

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<sup>9</sup> This practice is continued also in the Foreign policy Concept of 2008.

### 3.4 The reemergence of a Superpower – 2004-2007

According to German, the Russian rhetoric during Putin's second term became increasingly Anti-Western (German, 2010). The period from 2004 to 2007 is characterized by a growing number of disagreements between the political elite in Moscow and the heads of state in NATO (Thorun, 2009, p. 2). Marcel de Haas (2010, p. 21) argue that the 2003 Defense White Paper issued by the Russian government shows great ambivalence when dealing with the Alliance. On the one hand, Russia showed concern about the enlargement of the Alliance and especially on the issue of possible deployment of NATO forces on the territory of new NATO members. On the other hand, it also mentions how Russia wants to further deepen their relationship with NATO despite whatever differences there may be. Moscow's critical stand on NATO enlargement is still one of the most important reasons why the relationship once again became tense during this period, even though it is not until 2008 that the enlargement issue reaches its peak. The other main issue between them was the suspension of the Treaty on *Conventional Armed Forces in Europe* (CFE Treaty). In addition to this, several smaller disputes make the prospects for partnership deteriorate. In the following paragraphs I will give further attention to these issues of dispute.

#### **NATO's grand enlargement**

Russia had at this point in time announced that a large-scale war or armed conflict against NATO no longer was probable, and the Russian government expected all anti-Russian entries to be removed from the military planning in NATO (Haas, 2010, p. 22). Still, there was a widespread sense in Moscow that NATO was advancing dangerously close to the Russian borders (Pallin & Westerlund, 2010, p. 151) without giving Moscow any legal right to oppose it within the Alliance's framework. Nevertheless, in 2004 seven new states enter NATO as members: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. –Three of them former Warsaw Pact member states, another three former Soviet Union republics. The enlargement caused irritation within Moscow. Especially the Baltic States are important to Russia due to the high number of ethnic Russian's living there. In the foreign policy concept from 2000 Putin emphasizes the importance of securing the rights of these people, and it is stated that the Russian government will take active engagement in securing the rights of these people (The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2000). As these states become



part of NATO, Russia loses its political influence over internal affairs as well as the security of the Russians living there. Another obvious threat to Russia is that the enlargement makes the Alliance even larger and stronger. This means that in the balance of force shift. The old CFE Treaty zones are also affected, and this causes even more imbalance.

### **The CFE Treaty ‘moratorium’**

The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) dates back to the Soviet Union era, and is the most important disarmament agreement between NATO and the Warsaw Pact member states. Conceived in 1986-87 and negotiated between 1989 and 1990, the initial plan was to control the Soviet weaponry arsenal threatening Europe (Falkenrath, 1995, p. 119). The aim was to stop the military arms race and to reduce the number of conventional forces in Europe. The treaty was considered a cornerstone in the post Cold War security planning in Europe, and was meant to replace military confrontation first and foremost between the traditional East and the West division, but potentially also between states within the Alliance (Haas, 2010). It was signed in 1990 and entered into force two years later. Due to the major changes in the security reality in Europe after the CFE Treaty was first implemented, the CFE parties agreed in 1996 to initiate the process of changing the treaty from a bloc-to-bloc Treaty (Warsaw Pact – NATO) to a state-to-state basis instead (Haas, 2010, p. 64). In 1999, almost ten years after it was negotiated, Russia agrees to withdraw all military forces from the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, and to reduce their military in the North Caucasus, all in accordance with the CFE Treaty. Until 2004, Russia withdrew a large number of military equipment and personnel. However, when Russia in 2004 had still not complied with the full withdrawals from Georgia and Moldova, NATO together with other CFE member states decided to refrain from signing the Adapted CFE Treaty (Haas, 2010, p. 64). This started a political dispute, which ended with Russia threats to withdraw from the entire Treaty.

Concerning Georgia, which is in a special position due to the ongoing tension with Russia, agreement was reached in 2006 on the withdrawal of forces within 2008 (Haas, 2010). This late withdrawal from Georgia however did not go unheeded within the Alliance. In 2007, Putin walks up to the podium in his address to the houses of parliament and announces what he refers to as a Russian “moratorium” on implementing the CFE Treaty, blaming the West

for rejecting to ratify it (Haas, 2010, p. 64). He questioned the U.S.' plan to install a missile shield in Eastern Europe, and the planned NATO enlargement in the east. The way he saw it, this was not a situation caused by Russia. The fact that Moscow abandoned the CFE Treaty meant that NATO lost important insight into the Russian military planning. This was seen as a dramatic setback to the planned 'transparency', which was an important part of NATO's partnership vision. Further, less transparency to the Russian military planning also posed a potential threat to the security in the Alliance.

### **Energy security on the agenda**

The first energy crisis between Russia and Ukraine was another distraction to the diplomatic relations during this period. There has been a continuing diplomatic conflict between Russia and Ukraine since the end of the Cold War, and the relationship shifted a lot (Nygren, 2005, p. 149). One of the reasons for this has been Ukraine's flirtation and active drift towards NATO and the West (Nygren, 2005, p. 149). The shutdown of the gas supply came as a result of a pricing dispute between Ukraine's government and the Russian oil and gas company Gazprom. 90 per cent of the gas transported from Russia to the European market goes through Ukraine (Sokov, 2006). This makes Ukraine vital for the Russian economy and, hence, a very important diplomatic partner. As a result of Ukraine's special position in Russian energy security, Ukraine has been offered special pricing agreements together with the rest of the former Soviet Union federations. By late 2005, this price was set out to be \$ 50-80/mcm<sup>10</sup>, while average market price in Europe was 3-4 times higher (Stern, 2006, p. 6). By the beginning of 2006, Gazprom demanded 'European prices' unless Ukraine would allow Gazprom an equity stake in the transit pipeline network (Stern, 2006). Ukraine was not able to adjust to this price level without a proper transitional stage, but was not offered any agreeable alternative. Since Ukraine opposed any Russian buy-up of the strategically important gas pipelines, Gazprom cut off the gas supplies on January 1, 2006.

What this case shows us is how Russia takes on an increasingly aggressive political line towards its own neighbors. The use of coercive diplomacy indicates a much higher self-esteem in their foreign relations. Energy security is an important part of Russia's foreign security strategy, and it could be argued that it also is one of Russia's strongest weapons

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<sup>10</sup> Million Cubic Meters

against both its close neighbors and Europe. By taking on this role as a coercive power in Europe, Russia also made clear that it had regained a balance of power and competitive international position, which to some extent was lost after the Cold War (Haas, 2010). The Russian notion of being a great power and an important international actor was no longer just a vision, but a fact. In NATO's concept from 1999, energy security is not mentioned as part of NATO's strategic plan. This does not show up until later on, in 2010. Probably, this is due to the fact that energy security is a rather new part of the European security environment. Nevertheless, the concept from 1999 does mention that NATO is an essential partner in strengthening the evolving context of the Euro-Atlantic security, and that dialogue with other states is part of the strategy (The Alliance's Strategic Concept, 1999) in order to secure peace and stability in the region. Despite this, the Ukraine energy dispute was not discussed during the NRC meeting, but Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer revealed that the Alliance was negative to the way Russia had handled the case in Ukraine (de Hoop Scheffer, 2006).

## **Diplomatic relations**

Despite the diplomatic challenges Russia and NATO faced over these years, the NATO-Russia Council functioned as an important arena for discussion. When Lord Robertson, former Secretary General of NATO and Chairman of the North Atlantic Council, spoke to the press on 4 December 2004 after the (NRC) he said:

*“Once more the new spirit of NATO-Russia cooperation was crystal clear. This is one of the biggest changes NATO has brought about over the past four years of my term. As I prepare to step down, it is one of my biggest sources of satisfaction.”*

(Lord Robertson, 2003)

Since Russia now increasingly used economical, political and military power, the NRC was more important than ever in order to avoid serious confrontations between NATO and Russia. The fact that the CFE Treaty also failed, and the general focus on disarmament dropped (Haas, 2010) it was crucial to keep the diplomatic activity on a regular schedule. The encompassing of Russian values in Kremlin's foreign policy became raised throughout Putin's presidency. Putin managed to bring back the pride in the Russian state, and recalled

the notion of the 'Russian way' as a good alternative to the 'Western way'. Russia no longer wanted to adjust to the West and NATO in order to become part of it. Now, Moscow acted in their own way and demanded recognition for what they were and their way of conducting politics. The member states within the Alliance saw this as a more hostile Russian attitude and were less willing to open up for closer partnership with Russia. Globally, the international situation at this time is characterized by major uncertainties. The U.S.' inability to win peace in Iraq, the tension in the trans-Atlantic relationship, the increase in economical growth rates in China and India and a declining world economy made the international situation unstable and forced changes to the old power structure in the international system (Thorun, 2009). This, together with a growing Russian economy due to major oil and gas reserves boosted Russia's position towards the West. With a more balanced relationship between Russia and NATO in terms of military capacity, diplomacy became crucial in order to avoid a new 'cold war' of political and military disputes.

So, despite the fact that Russia continued their re-emergence as a great power and that the conflict level in general raised, it was never at any time any danger of military conflicts between Russia and the NATO. Pouliot (2010, p. 39) mentions that identity constitutes interests, which in turns leads to action. However, in order to engage in a military conflict one must have both the *want* and the *means*. Said differently, one must have both the interest strong enough to engage military means while at the same time be in possession of the capacity; economically, politically, and militarily. A British military officer said it this way:

*"I think one have to differentiate between what is a threat and what is a risk. If you say a threat is more immediate, a threat is a combination of capability and intent. Now I would argue that at the moment, Russia still has the capability but not the intent".*

(Pouliot, 2010, p. 105)

As Russia proved against Ukraine, it is in possession of necessary means in order coerce, but it is a lack of intent to do so against NATO. A Russian officials that Pouliot interviewed for his book said: "We (Russia and NATO) may disagree. We may get sore, both sides, but we are not afraid of war" (Pouliot, 2010, p. 101). The relationship between Russia and NATO may be tense, but none of the parties have the interest of going to war, nor the capacity to get

involved in such a conflict. However, the level of mistrust, that to some extent have been present ever since the Cold War period, seems to worsen during the Putin-presidency, and it goes both ways (Pouliot, 2010, p. 98). A Canadian official say this about the time period around 2006: “I think you can never dismiss the Russian potential for the use of force, but the parameters, the limits of Russian policy options are much narrower than they used to be; which is a good thing” (Pouliot, 2010, p. 102). Here, the Canadian official indicates that it is the *means* and not the *will* Russia is lacking. Realism theory would explain this by saying that this indicates that Russia as a rational actor considers force as something that would not benefit their state, due to political, economical and military reckoning. Or that Moscow does not have the interest in military conflict because they know that there only is a insignificant chance of winning.

## Discussion

At the end of 2007, the partnership between Russia and NATO is still only close to a strategic one, despite all the effort to become closer partners. For Moscow, the most important reason why they do not involve closer with the Alliance is the lack of acknowledgement for being a great power. This is seen in the case of the crumbling CFE Treaty. Russia does not want to withdraw their forces in Georgia and Moldova as long as NATO and the U.S. engage in plans for a new missile defense system in Eastern Europe. Further, the enlargement issues is still provoking Russia. In Trevor Taylor’s article on Power Politics (1978, p. 122) he acknowledges, “it is in the nature of the state to acquire as much power as it can, because of the dangerous and anarchic world in which it exists”. This aspect of states being rational *power-maximizing actors* is an important aspect when explaining why Russia disagrees with both the CFE Treaty and the enlargement. One of the things Russia has to consider is whether power somehow is a constant sum, or a zero-sum game, meaning that they by giving NATO more power and control, has to give up some of their own power and control. –Or, whether a normative partnership may give positive spillover because of the transparency, mutual assistance and security cooperation. Neither can have it both ways. Russia has therefore, due to the aspect of power maximizing, sovereignty and need for control, naturally been skeptical of letting NATO get insight into domestic affairs and military strategy since this would empower NATO while weaken Russia. Still, in order to reach a normative partnership, this kind of openness and cooperation is necessary.

According to Pouliot (2010, p. 221), the NATO-Russia diplomacy continued on very much the same path during this period. This I do not believe is the case. The diplomatic relations improved, and activity in the NRC must be said to have changed the partnership towards the better in this period. What is eminent about this period though, is how realism thinking is increasing. Russia is acting more ambitiously, and is using economical, political and military means in order to force their policy upon other states. Despite unstable economical times, Moscow has managed to maintain Russia's position as a great power, proving that Russia's identity is unique no matter how the economical situation is. This proves that the Russian Federation has the ability, the resources and the history to reemerge as a great power, as they have done several times before. Already under Yeltsin, Moscow argued that Russian foreign policy should aim to gain international acknowledgement as an equal partner in its relations with the West (Thorun, 2009, p. 35). The way Russia handled the case of the CFE Treaty proves that Russia now to a greater extent is able to balance NATO.

The symbolic power struggle that can be dated back to the Cold War was still eminent, even though the diplomatic channels to handle them were better organized, e.g. through the NRC. Thorun (2009, pp. 10-11) argue that the political elite in Moscow suddenly became a lot more optimistic under Putin's presidency, with a stronger belief in Russia's ability to develop itself, and the strong faith in the Russian identity as something unique and important, and that these collective ideas rise throughout this period. Social constructivists argue that the collective ideas affect important variables like state interest and the strategy used to achieve these interests (Fierke, 2007). The social dimension captures the importance of norms, values and language (Fierke, 2007, p. 168). Russia has developed a different set of norms and values throughout their history. The illiberal, autocratic tradition has made state security and national interest more emphasized than human rights and societal security. Also, Russia has a history where NATO was seen as the enemy. This may help explain why some states are more easily integrated into the Alliance while others struggles to both accept and be accepted into a normative partnership. When the Baltic States were integrated in NATO this was a result of a common understanding of international relations and the security strategy. They apparently have more in common with NATO's member states in terms of values and interests. The Baltic States are closer to the West as a result of them turning away from Russia after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Baltic States

looked to NATO for security and defense against the Russian Federation. The Baltic States applied for membership in the EU in 2002, and when they became accepted in both NATO and the EU in 2004, it was a result of a long process of integration, including a 'westernization' of their political culture. Even though they were former Warsaw Pact members, their political orientation was towards the West. They viewed Russia as a potential enemy, and therefore had more in common with the Alliance than with their former allies in the east. Russia does not fit into the same category as these states, and are due to historical and cultural reasons harder to integrate in NATO.

However, the NRC is speeding up the process of political socialization between Russia and NATO, and makes possible an exchange of values and norms in order to educate each other. It could therefore be argued that the NRC represents the most important step towards normative partnership. Most other states that already have been integrated in NATO have started with a cooperation council in order to develop democratic values and increase the European identity. Today, Russia and NATO do to some extent share the value of communication, peace and mutual cooperation rather than the use of force. Russia therefore seems to have adopted the belief that peace and cooperation give a positive spillover effect. Realists only see a limited role for 'reason', morality, and institutions in world politics (Baylis & Wirtz, 2010, p. 8), and believe that states only act within morally when or if it benefits their own national interests. Constructivists on the other hand, believe that states take all these three into account when conducting their policy in order to build good relations with other states for future cooperation and peace. From a constructivist point of view, Russia would benefit from a partnership with NATO because it turns the zero-sum game into a spillover effect. If the two could find a way to agree on the symbolic power of partnership, and the imposition of meanings and legitimacy through social relations, the zero-sum game of security strategy would end and there would be a mutual gain in the peace that follows (Pouliot, 2010, p. 45). However, Russia will either have to adopt and adapt to NATO's political norms. This would end the Russian habitus of great power notion and strengths, as it would become 'one of many' in the Alliance, rather than an independent great power.

From this, realism theory emerges as the best explanation as to why Russia and NATO do not agree to a normative partnership during this period. As Putin's first presidential term was

coming to an end, Russia and NATO were back to discussing border security issues and revealed that there still was an element of hostility due to a lack of trust in each other's intentions. It seems that the overall situation between Russia and the West during this time almost took a step backwards and became slightly worse than the prospect was only a few years before. So, there are still major differences in the political culture and norms, which unable Russia and NATO to move forward. Nevertheless, the state security dimension explains the Russian habitus during the whole period better, as the element of old hostility due to the lack of trust is still there, as both see the other as a potential threat that needs to be balanced.

### **3.5 Diplomatic pressure test – 2008-2010**

On the 7 May 2008, Dimitry Medvedev took his presidential oath. Then, only a few days later, on the 9 May, Russia showed to the world how they had finally recovered militarily. The traditional military parade, which takes place every year to commemorate the 1945 victory over Nazi Germany, was for the first time since the collapse of the Soviet Union celebrated with heavy armor and missiles rolling down the Red Square in Moscow. In his Victory Day address to the people, Medvedev stated that “the victors gave us great reason to believe in our national strength, self-reliance and freedom” (Medvedev cited in Yuri Zarakhovich, 2008). When looking back, the first year of Medvedev's presidency appear like a chain of political problems. NATO was ones again talking about expanding geographically, this time into the Russian backyard, the Georgian conflict flared up again resulting in Russian military action, the global financial system collapses causing impact both within NATO and in Russia, and, partly as a result of this, Russia and Ukraine found themselves in another energy dispute. Each of these cases will now be presented chronologically in order to explain how they affected the partnership between Russia and the Alliance.

#### **NATO overeating?**

During the Bucharest summit in April 2008, Albania and Croatia were invited to begin accession talks in order to become normative partners and full members of NATO (Bucharest



Summit Declaration, 2008). In the declaration it is emphasized that this is a result of hard work, and that it demonstrates that Albania and Croatia have committed themselves to the common security in Europe and NATO's shared values (Bucharest Summit Declaration, 2008). NATO further claimed that the accession of these states would strengthen the security for all of the Euro-Atlantic area, as it would bring the Alliance closer to the goal of a whole, free and peaceful Europe (Bucharest Summit Declaration, 2008). Albania agreed to the Warsaw pact, and was up until 1968 part of the Warsaw Pact area; and both states are former communist states under the influence of the Soviet Union. This enlargement therefore led to a debate within the Alliance on how far it was wise to go in terms of integrating former Soviet Union allies. Several NATO member states drew the line at Ukraine and Georgia, in accordance with former president Bill Clinton's advice (see debate in Pouliot, 2010) on not to provoke Russia to the breaking point. Nevertheless, the Alliance agreed during the Bucharest Summit that Georgia would become a member in the near future. In Moscow this is viewed as a major disruption to their political bonds to this state, and due to Russia's increased focus on energy politics and energy security, seeing Ukraine move towards NATO membership caused political headaches. This is seen in the Russian ambassador in NATO, Dmitry Rogozin's remark when Russia Today interviewed him in July 2008:

*"NATO expansion reminds me of overeating in American fast food joints. Because there comes a point when you get so big that you might not get out of your chair. It is time for NATO to go on a diet!"*

(NATO envoy Dmitry Rogozin on Russia Today, 2008)

In Moscow it was a common agreement that NATO by 'expanding' further into the East, violated the strategic balance in Europe, causing more instability in addition to threatening Russian territory (see e.g. Pouliot, 2010; Sergunin, 2004). This is confirmed in the Foreign Policy Concept of 2008, where Medvedev states "Russia retains its negative attitude towards the expansion of NATO (The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2008). Russian officials also believe that Georgia and Ukraine have a long way to go before they are ready for NATO membership, both democratically but also militarily. Georgia is a conflicted region. It is divided by a series of unresolved conflicts, especially with the Russians (Pallin &

Westerlund, 2010). It is also an arena of geopolitical confrontation because of the gas pipelines that are transiting Georgian territory. However, the Georgian membership was reconfirmed at the Lisbon Summit in 2010, where it was stated “[NATO] reaffirm all element of that decision” and “we will foster political dialogue and practical cooperation with Georgia” (Lisbon Summit Declaration, 2010). And in 2010, the NATO Liaison Office in Georgia was officially opened, and the practical assistance and support in order to establish and guide the future reforms towards normative partnership started.

Ukraine does not have the same progress towards NATO membership. The formal basis for Ukraine’s relations with the Alliance dates back to 1997, when the Charter on a Distinct Partnership established the NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC). NATO has an extensive cooperation with Ukraine in the area of defense and security, and the NATO-Ukraine Joint Working Group of Defense Reforms is the primary focus (NATO). The dialogue was intensified in 2005 as part of the ‘open door policy’ however; the present Ukrainian government is not seeking membership with the Alliance today, but is rather maintaining their practical cooperation with NATO (NATO’s relations with Ukraine, 2009). The practical cooperation with the Alliance means that NATO is involved in assisting Ukraine in their internal reforms. This means that both Russia and NATO is involved in Ukrainian policy making.

The negative Russian reaction to NATO’s enlargement in the east is mostly explained by Russia’s fear of putting Russian borders at risk, jeopardizing Russian territorial security. NATO officials claim that the major goal is to promote security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area as a whole (Polikanov 2001:28), but officials in Kremlin has doubted that this is the whole explanation. The question in Moscow therefore remains: Does NATO want Russia in the Alliance in order to help secure Russia, or does the Alliance want to secure itself *against* Russia? Ever since the Alliance was founded, it has provided the U.S. with control over the European continent. One can therefore not rule out the possibility that the real motivation behind the eastern enlargement is U.S’ desire to remain present in Europe (Polikanov 2001), and now also in the former Warsaw Pact area. The uncertainty in Moscow on what are the main motivations behind NATO’s interest in partnership with Russia may

therefore lead to a feeling of being controlled and not trusted. And it remains to be seen whether this is something that is possibly to overcome.

### **The 2008 Georgian conflict**

The Alliance's enlargement plans to Georgia must be seen in the connection with the Russia-Georgia conflict that occurred during the same time. A serious diplomatic conflict erupted between Russia and Georgia in 2006, after Tbilisi expelled several Russian officials because of spying accusations (Pouliot, 2010, p. 223). This was during the same time as NATO offered Georgia intensified dialogue in order to speed up the integration process. Since the president in Georgia already had announced that Georgia was ready, and since the U.S and Georgia already had signed several declarations, the Georgian membership did seem within reach. However, the Russian Federation did not approve. On the 7 August 2008, a skirmish between the forces of Georgian and of the Russian ally South Ossetia started a new conflict between Russia and Georgia. Russian military forces responded already the next day, as they drove their tanks into Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The Russian military intervention in Georgia raised several important questions about Moscow's intentions towards Russia's 'near abroad' and the future direction of Russia's foreign policy (German, 2010, p. 94). During the Five Day war in Georgia, Russia proved that they were prepared for and could deploy forces relatively quick in spite of the considerable challenges with the Georgian terrain (Pallin & Westerlund, 2010). Russia claims that the reason behind the use of military force in Georgia's separatist regions has been the protection of the Russian minority in South Ossetia. This is in accordance with the foreign policy concept stating that it is the Russian Federation's uppermost priority to "provide comprehensive protection of rights and legitimate interests of Russian citizens and compatriots abroad" (The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2008). This has been Moscow's mission ever since the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Russian people.

The swift deployment of almost 20 000 men in only a couple of days showed the impressive Russian military improvement that had taken place since the 1990s (Pallin & Westerlund, 2010). Compared to Russia's first war in Chechnya, this operation was well planned, well organized, and executed according to plan, with the use of new technology like cyber warfare and a diplomatic offensive (Pallin & Westerlund, 2010, p. 151). This led to a new debate in

NATO, where Russia's military potential once again had to be reviewed and discussed. After it became clear to NATO what Russia had done, they suspended all high-level consultations with Russia, leaving the Russian Federation a 'state non grata' in the western community. The way Russia had handled the conflict with Georgia together with NATO's disillusion with Russia's political positioning over the recent years, disrupted their relations (Pallin & Westerlund, 2010). That Russia was essentially a peacefully oriented state that wanted nothing but good relations with its neighbors (Pallin & Westerlund, 2010, p. 175) was one of the most important premises for European security strategy in the post-Cold War era. Deputy assistant secretary of state, Matthew Bryza further argued that the Georgian conflict marked a turning point because it demonstrated that Russia was now capable *and* willing to be belligerent, and use force against smaller neighbor states (Bryza cited in Blank, 2010, p. 175). Secondly, it raised the question about Georgia's prospects for NATO membership. When Georgia during the conflict asked NATO for assistance, the tension mounted (Pouliot, 2010, p. 224), causing even more stress to the situation. Moscow had proved that they have special interests in Georgia because of the Russian population living there, and the strategic location of Georgia in terms of geopolitics and energy.

### **Missile Defense shield and Political 'War'**

In addition to the question on enlargement, Russia also had a critical stand towards the *Ballistic Missile Defense System* (BMDS)<sup>11</sup> NATO was planning to install in Poland and the Czech Republic. Moscow claimed that the missile defense system potentially could be used against Russia in an act of war, and hence posed a serious threat to Russian national security. It would therefore, according to Russia, shift the power balance further to NATO's advantage and further impede the CFE Treaty disagreements. It could probably also be argued that part of the problem was the emasculation of Russia, since Kremlin did not get any control over the systems 'red button'. Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov said that "We insist on only one thing: that we're equal part of it" (Ivanov interviewed by Baribeau & Henry Meyer, 2011). In this lays that Russia wants to join the planned BMDS with a so-called 'red-button' right, meaning an equal ability to NATO to launch strikes at incoming weapons. Since Russia was left out of the 'red-button circle of trust', speculations also begun on what the intention with the defense shield was. Could it also be a defense against Russia? When Dimitry Rogozin was confronted with this question, he made clear what he thought about NATO's plans:

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<sup>11</sup> Also referred to as Anti Missile Defense (AMD)

*“What is the purpose? It is supposed to intercept missiles fired at Europe or America. –But who is going to do that? Pardon me, but are there any fools in the White House who really think that bin Laden is running around in Afghanistan with a missile under his arm looking for a plot of drawn to launch it from like a fire cracker? This is crazy! It is obvious to everyone that the AMD system is not meant as a protection against Iran or bin Laden, it is only a poor attempt to question Russia’s nuclear potential”*

(NATO Envoy Dmitry Rogozin on Russia Today, 2009)

This is why Russian officials later have indicated a new arms race; Russia either wants to get involved in the planning and controlling of this system, or they will build their own system at the Russian side of the border in order to maintain the power balance. In this case, the diplomatic means have not been able to solve the relations between Russia and NATO, and Russia is responding by threatening with military technical measures. This response gives a strong security policy déjà vu.

### **Facing financial crisis**

The very same year, yet another international occurrence put Russia’s strength to the test. This time a worldwide financial crisis, starting in the USA before spreading as a wildfire across the world, causing the Russian trade market to collapse. The worst effect of this crisis for Russia was probably the declining oil prices that came as a result of the financial crisis. The oil price dropped more than 60 per cent in less than three months, from an artificially high level of \$140 a barrel in July, to less than \$40 a barrel in December (Frolov, 2008). At the same time, the ruble fell 20 to 25 per cent compared to the dollar, and even more to the euro, depleting the Russian Central Bank’s reserves (Frolov, 2008). The full-scale consequences of the financial crisis was for long underestimated, and as Frolov further claims “the government tried to wish away the problem by restricting a public discussion on the crisis and emphasizing its ‘American origin’” (Frolov, 2008). Because the crisis started as an American phenomenon, it did not take long before the Russian public view on the USA and the West once again worsened. People in Russia started holding Americans responsible for dragging the whole world’s financial systems down with them. As a result of the tense economical situation the Russian Federation had to review their military spending and prepare for harder financial times. This affected the foreign policy thinking in the last half of 2008.

## Concepts and strategy

In July, only a few months after his inauguration, president Medvedev launched his first security document, the foreign policy concept of the Russian Federation. The main points in this concept is the primacy of international law; that the world should be multipolar; that Russia seeks friendly relations with the West; that Russia will continue to protect ethnic Russians in their near abroad; and, as a continuation of the previous point, that Russia has privileges in certain regions in their near abroad (Haas, 2010, p. 85; The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2008). In the introduction it is stated that it is in Russia's upper most importance to "ensure national security, to preserve and strengthen its sovereignty and territorial integrity" (The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2008). Russia will develop "international cooperation on the basis of equality, mutual respect for interests and mutual benefits" (The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2008). However, when it comes to the Russian Federation's view on cooperation with NATO, the president state that "proceeding from a realistic assessment of the role of NATO, Russia deems it important to ensure progressive development of interaction within the format of the Russia-NATO Council (...)" and "apolitical dialogue and practical cooperation in resolving issues relating to responses to common threats (...)" (The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2008). This is believed to be the inner core of Russian strategic thinking, namely to secure the borders and the nation first as a prerequisite for all other security planning, and cooperate with NATO whenever it is benefitting the Russian Federation.

The alarming part for is that Kremlin suggests an alternative solution to ensure European security. They want to create "a truly open, democratic system of regional collective security and cooperation ensuring the unity of the Euro-Atlantic region, from Vancouver to Vladivostok" (The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2008). This agreement shall be based on "the essential principles of interstate relations, the inviolability of borders, the indivisibility of security and the illegitimacy of ensuring security at the expense of the security of other participants in international relations" (Pouliot, 2010, p. 226). Implicit in this lays a notion that reveals that the Russian Federation does not see NATO as a democratic security organization that unites Russian and European security thinking. The fact that Medvedev is proposing an alternative security community does not seem promising for the Russia-NATO relationship. Medvedev claims that "traditional cumbersome military and

political alliances can no longer provide for counteracting the whole range of modern challenges and threats which are transnational in their nature” (The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2008). Whether it is NATO he has in mind is difficult to confirm, but at least he seems positive to take part in network diplomacy, which is based on a flexible form of participation. Using Smith’s definitions this would though translate into a pragmatic partnership, which is far from having the qualities of a normative one.

Medvedev is more positive to alliance commitments on soft security issues like demographic problems, global poverty, energy poverty, illegal immigration etc, and believes that these problems need a collective adequate response from the world community. However, he also mentions that the international community needs a “common vision” (The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2008) for the political strategy. This, he says, is best achieved if everyone has an open, honest, and substantial discussion of the problems confronting the mankind. The ideas Medvedev has for political and security cooperation is very much the same as what already exists within the framework of the Alliance. This could only mean that Medvedev is interested in a closer partnership with the West, however not within NATO. This confirms the notion of NATO and Russia having too many Cold War ghosts, which unable full integration of Russia. Still, Medvedev’s security community vision does not indicate any closer commitments than a pragmatic partnership. This is further emphasized in the concept where Medvedev notes, “Russia pursues an open, predictable and pragmatic foreign policy determined by its national interests (The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2008). He wants to ensure that all cooperation with other states is in accordance with Russian national interests. Further, he wants Russia to develop international cooperation on the basis of equality, mutual respect for interests and mutual benefits” (The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2008). This is all in accordance with the pragmatic level of cooperation, and does not indicate any closer partnership with NATO during his term.

In “Russia’s national security strategy to 2020”, only one out of a total of 112 points takes into consideration the future relationship with NATO. “Russia is prepared to develop relations with NATO on the basis of equality” (Russia's National Strategy to 2020, 2009). It does not specify what kind of relationship, or to what degree they are willing to get involved. Nor does

it say anything about what the Russian Federation mean's by the term 'equality'. The fact that partnership with the Alliance is left out of their domestic security strategy can be interpreted in several ways. Russia seems determined to manage without any NATO involvement- –Or, they consider NATO as just a forum for foreign security discussions, and not an organization that has anything to do with the Russian *national* security strategy. Still, the document repeats the continuing negative attitude towards NATO enlargement and the Alliance's plan to extend military infrastructure closer to the Russian border which, according to the Russian president "attempts to endow NATO with global functions that go counter to norms of international law" (Russia's National Strategy to 2020, 2009). This, the document states, is unacceptable to Russia.

## **Discussion**

Between 2008 and 2010, balance of power has been mentioned several times. Russia claim that NATO is violating the balance of power by admitting Eastern European states into the Alliance. The same way, Russia is also determined to build its own missile defense shield in order to balance the U.S. and NATO's planned missile shield. The return to the balance of power stadium, instead of uniting under the same security strategy is rather disappointing. This means that despite the PfP, the JPC and the NRC, Russia and NATO is still not trusting each other, and are balancing each other rather than creating a common home. Few serious military analysts in Russia today believe that NATO poses an actual threat to Russia or that a Russia-NATO military confrontation is imminent (Pallin & Westerlund, 2010). This is further acknowledged by president Medvedev who argues, "the threat of a full-scale war, including a nuclear one, has been diminished" (The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2008). However, the need to balance each other is still extremely important. The energy dispute was discussed thoroughly within the Alliance, since the gas-pipeline does not only supply Ukraine, but also several NATO/EU member states as well. The fact that Russia actually stopped the gas flow reminded the West what a powerful actor Russia is in energy security. Moscow violated important European norms by not solving this diplomatically, but they also showed how they are capable of actually cutting off strategically important energy sources by just flipping the lever. Both in the case of Georgia and Ukraine, the most important aspect is not the action itself, but the signals Russia is sending. Moscow shows the West that they are capable of and willing to use extreme measures in order to force their will upon other



states. Moscow does also prove that they do not care about Western norms and values of peaceful democracy and diplomacy.

NATO ministers have reiterated their negative assessment towards Russia's way of handling certain situations, like the Georgian crisis and the energy dispute with Ukraine (Allies discussion, 2008). The Alliance have called upon Russia to respect the international values and principles on which the international security community is based, and to refrain from confrontational statements and threats in order to work towards a more peaceful relationship with their near abroad (Allies discussion, 2008). How this can be achieved while NATO is still involved with Ukraine and Georgia remains to be seen. However, in early 2009, only months after the Georgian conflict, NATO and Russia did re-establish their relations even though the illusions and hopes attached to the NATO-Russia Council in 2002 had been thoroughly dashed (Pallin & Westerlund, 2010).

The Lisbon Summit Declaration offers a picture of NATO's present day vision for Europe and the Alliance. It states that everyone who shares the same values and interests are welcome to apply as a member, commonly known as the 'open door policy'. This means that Russia is unable to bring with it certain Russian values and interests but rather have to adopt NATO's values and interests in order to become member. This is part of the membership bargain. NATO emphasizes in the 1999-concept their wish to enlarge further towards the east, resulting in a closer border with the Russian Federation. In the Russian foreign policy concept of 2008, Dimitry Medvedev states that "Russia retains its negative attitude towards the expansion of NATO (The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, 2008). It is in Russia's best interest to maintain control in the area of the former Soviet Union, underlining that Moscow still feels some ownership to this region, and considered the former Soviet area as its sphere of influence from which the West should stay out. Russia and NATO's interests do not appear to be compatible, and one of them therefore has to give in, in order to make a normative partnership happen.

Despite over twenty years of peace between Russia and NATO, with diplomatic discussions revealing interests in building a common security strategy; the situation has not changed much. So, why is it that NATO and Russia are on a standstill, partnership wise?

Representatives from Russia and the member states within the Alliance meet on a more regular basis than before, and have a stronger developed diplomacy than ever before, but they still disagree on the same matters they have disagreed on since the end of the Cold War. In the aftermath of the Georgian conflict, Medvedev proved to be very active in introducing plans for military reforms and modernization of the Russian armed forces (Haas, 2010). The security documents and military reforms constitute the structure of Medvedev's foreign security policy (Haas, 2010). As to its position in the international arena, the foreign policy concept described Russia as possessing a powerful posture with a fully fledged role in global affairs and being one of the influential centers in the modern world (Haas, 2010, p. 84). Because of Russia's position as a great power Russia has a substantial influence on international developments (Haas, 2010, p. 84). The Russian 'bear' seems wide awake again, and while the close cooperation between Russia and the Alliance looked promising during the Russian hibernation in the 1990s, it once again looks very difficult to politically unite the two today. The Russian demand of being acknowledged as a great power and an equal to those in the alliance is still an absolute demand from Kremlin. What is important to note is that the diplomatic relations that started during the last period of the Cold War at least *normalized* more during the 1990s (Haas, 2010), and they have continued to evolve up to this day. As one of the senior policymakers in NATO put it when he was interviewed for Pouliot's study: "It doesn't always go very well, but at least we talk about it" (anonymous cited in Pouliot, 2010, p. 117). The fact that Russia and NATO are able to confront each other in peaceful and diplomatic manners is an important safety valve in order to avoid serious confrontations.

Today NATO and Russia have, according to Pouliot's studies (2010, p. 4), 1) established several multilateral channels; 2) significantly decreased border on their mutual border; 3) partly adapted military planning away from mutual confrontation and over on areas of common threats; 4) similarly defined several common security threats; and 5) generally held, although with some inconsistencies, a discourse of community with each other. Nevertheless, as we have seen in the last time period, from 2008 to 2010, the channels for diplomatic discussions have been very vulnerable. When Russia drove their tanks into Georgia, and the true need for a well-functioning diplomacy was obvious, the NATO-Russia Council failed to maintain any diplomatic relationship at all.

Where does this leave Russia and NATO today? And even more importantly, how can we explain it? During this last period the most important reason why NATO and Russia did not develop their partnership seems to be Russia's growing hostility towards their near abroad, as we saw in the cases of Georgia and Ukraine. Instead of using peaceful, diplomatic tools to solve their conflicts, Russia acted militarily and used coercive power in order to get their political will. Russia did not only act differently than the norm within the Alliance, but also in a way threatening to NATO. NATO is still the strongest of the two, and in order for the two to unite in a normative partnership today Russia is the one which has to adjust. So why is Russia not adjusting? Even though a military conflict between NATO and Russia are unlikely, it is important for Russia to have a strategy that takes into account both likely and unlikely threats. This is common for all states. Therefore, Russia has reason to feel threatened by NATO's planned missile defense system and the deployment of NATO forces close to the Russian border. As long as Russia stands outside the Alliance, and therefore do not have any control over these military tools, they will decrease Russian military capacity and be a potential threat to the Russian territory. Russia saw the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) as a Soviet-light, or a way of maintaining their influence in this region. With NATO's ongoing enlargement in the east, Russia loses this opportunity to control important resources and it also takes away Russia's buffer between their own territory and the Alliance. Border security and the Russian sovereignty are therefore important variables in order to explain the Russian attitude towards the Alliance. This indicates that realism theory offers a good explanation since it is the classical realist concerns of national security that is still dominant. The NRC has proven to be an important arena for diplomacy between Russia and NATO. Unfortunately it has also proven to be very unstable. The dialogue is only stable as long as Russia and NATO discuss issues of mutual interests and common goals. However, when there are serious disagreements on the agenda, it all tends to fall apart. The only fallacy with a realist explanation is that Russia has proven willing to cooperate with several NATO member states, including the U.S., which for long was the Russian enemy number one. It is when the cooperation is within the framework of the Alliance that Russia no longer wants to commit. The U.S. is quite similar to Russia when it comes to how they meet security threats. While NATO as an alliance emphasizes dialogue, cooperation, and preventative means in order to gain security and ensure stability, Russia and the U.S. tend to see military response as an effective and legit way of solving situations that threaten national security. It could therefore also be argued that Russia and NATO's identity is too far apart for any stable cooperation, since Russia cooperates well with like-minded states within the Alliance.



## 4 Conclusion

The analysis of the Russia-NATO historical period from 1991 and 2010 has given a valuable insight into their partnership development. As mentioned the guiding assumption for this thesis was that the stagnated partnership development was due to either a lack of common ‘we-ness’ and a difference in norms and values for what best serves the states national interest, or a mutual lack of trust in each other due to factors like military capacity, threats to state security, and a need for balancing power. What is absolutely clear is that the relations between Russia and NATO are complex, and that no one answer can explain why they have not moved towards a normative partnership. However, the analysis does point towards some important factors that do stand out as explanation for why normative partnership is not reached. In the upcoming paragraph I will offer a brief summary of the analysis in order to bring out the main findings. I will then apply these main findings to the research question in order to answer why the Russian Federation and NATO have failed to reach a normative partnership. In the next section I will discuss the research question in a broader sense, in order to apply different perspectives and contexts. Here, I will also include some thoughts about where I believe Russia and NATO is heading in terms of partnership, based on what the analysis has told us about the past and present.

### 4.1 Main findings

From 1991 to 1993/94, Russia and NATO had a pragmatic partnership, which included practical cooperation on matters of mutual interest, like military planning, disarmament, peacekeeping and defense-related issues. The analysis points out three main factors why Russia and NATO did not move closer to a normative partnership during this period. Firstly, it was still too early for both Russia and NATO to establish such a partnership. The Russian Federation suffered from an identity crisis due to their major internal changes. Russia still had some of the old Soviet identity, but had to create their own foreign policy identity based on their new political position. NATO had a quest for a ‘European identity’ for all member

states, but Russia was not compatible with this demand. It was also a domesticated period in Russia, meaning that global engagements were kept on a minimum. A normative partnership with NATO was therefore not prioritized. Secondly, there was still an obvious lack of trust between the two. NATO was still balancing the potential Russian military capacity, and viewed Eastern Europe as a potential area of instability. Russia did not trust NATO's intentions, and saw the planned enlargement as a threat to their national security. As seen in the analysis, the Russian need for NATO in order to maximize its security is mutually proportional with the willingness to create closer relations. Russia was not genuinely willing to become incorporated in a normative partnership, but the lack of options due to their political and military strength and capability affected their policy. Thirdly, the increased European mentality made it easier for Russia and NATO to cooperate, and we see a strong development from the situation during the Cold War. However, several conflicts occurred between Russia and NATO during this period due to an obvious lack of 'we-ness' in their relations. Russia viewed partnership with NATO as a zero-sum game, and did not value the 'social' goods that the Alliance could offer. The positive attitude towards NATO was therefore a result of *realpolitik* rather than a shared understanding of the value of NATO as a security alliance.

From 1993/94 to 2000 two main occurrences ended the early-1990s 'honeymoon'. These are the Kosovo war and the enlargement. Russia had a strong tradition for non-interference. Russia is also an illiberal democracy, putting state security first. The difference in values is clear, as the two interpreted the Kosovo conflict differently. The partnership deteriorated due to a different set of values and norms for how to interact with each other and how to respond to external crisis. In the case of the Kosovo war, it is a total lack of a common 'we-ness' rather than state security or national interest that is the main reason why Russia and NATO does not become closer partners. This points to a constructivist explanation. The enlargement debate did also affect Russia and NATO's partnership. Russia was not pleased with NATO's increased engagements in their near abroad, and saw it as a threat to their national security. This is a matter of *realpolitik*. However, this did not impact their partnership to the same extent as the Kosovo war did. The analysis therefore indicates that a constructivist approach offers the best explanation for why Russia and NATO did not develop towards a normative partnership during this period.

Between 2000 and 2004, Russia and NATO's partnership developed towards the better. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York, European states return to a more conservative understanding of national security, e.g. with border security. Material-institutional capital like cooperation and alliances is focused on as a way of handling a global threat, and hard security and military means become more legit than during the 1990s. This unites Russia and the West to a greater extent. Due to the establishment of the NRC, the partnership was moving closer towards a strategic partnership. However, the NRC was at its early stage mainly a *real-political* establishment. However, in 2003 Putin took a seemingly anti-NATO stand. Russia focused more on military threats, and claimed that NATO was violating the principle of state sovereignty. NATO's 'out-of-area' debate together with the enlargement to three Warsaw Pact member states was by Russia not seen as an expanded European identity and a positive security development, but rather a border security issue. As the analysis shows, all cooperation was still on a practical level, and the lack of partnership development is best explained by realism theory.

From 2004 until 2007, two important factors had a direct impact on the Russia-NATO partnership. The first is NATO's 'grand enlargement' in the east; the second is the disintegration of the CFE Treaty. Here, the lack of trust in each other is striking. Despite the NRC and several attempts to advance the level of trust, neither Russia nor NATO managed to take the guard down. Throughout this period, balance of power is increasingly important. Putin claimed that NATO's enlargement destroyed the power-balance in Europe, while NATO did not trust Russia's intentions in Georgia. The fact that Russia decided to abandon the CFE Treaty showed how they no longer took reprimands from NATO, and also how Russia was determined to balance NATO's military capacity. As major energy power and regional hegemony, Moscow acted increasingly assertive in their foreign policy. Russia showed how military means were still seen as the most important tool in international relations. Hence, the analysis again indicates that *realpolitik* offers the best description of this period, and that realism theory thus gives the best explanation why Russia and NATO does not manage to move towards a normative partnership within 2007.

From 2008 to 2010 the partnership between Russia and NATO further deteriorates. When NATO at the Bucharest summit in 2008 invites Albania and Croatia, Dmitry Rogozin accused NATO of 'overeating'. The most important factor why Russia and NATO failed in reaching a normative partnership throughout this period was however the lack of mutual trust in military affairs. This is best seen in the case of the planned *Ballistic Missile Defense System* (BMDS) in Eastern Europe. Officials in Moscow claimed that the BMDS is built partially as defense against Russian missiles, and responded by announcing a missile defense shield of their own in order to balance NATO's capacity. The general use of realistic terms and military means increased throughout this period. The Georgian war shows how Russia had regained their military strength, and was ready to play an active role in their near abroad, in accordance with their own national interest. This all points to a *real*-political rather than a constructivism theory explanation.

## Conclusion

Each period consists of several occurrences, and Russia and NATO are engaged in both hard security and soft security issues. Some occurrences are best explained by constructivism theory while others are best explained by *realpolitik* and realism theory. Since the end of the Cold War, several scholars of international political theory have questioned whether realism theory offers a good explanation for political occurrences in our time. Constructivism theory argues that all states and organizations have their own distinct values and norms, and that they are affected by their history. Further, they say that these norms and values can be shared and learned, and that states thus are in constant change, and that interests and values will differ over time. The analysis does however not show signs of any such change. Rather, the analysis shows that the dominant reason why the Russian Federation and NATO fail to reach a normative partnership still is best explained by *realpolitik*. According to constructivism theory, the relations between Russia and NATO should have change in accordance with the shifts in international relations. Agreements like the PfP and the CFE Treaty should according to constructivism theory have developed their mutual understanding and to a certain degree changed how they view each other and how they view international politics. The analysis does not show any convincing proof of this. The current partnership between Russia and NATO is founded mainly on the same interests, motives, and means today as it was twenty years ago, despite whatever changes that has occurred to the political environment. There is still continuing need to balance each other militarily in order to secure their own national



security and Russia has never agreed to anything that at the time was not beneficial for Russian state security and national interest. This is an interesting discovery because it contradicts many of the post-Cold War international relations assumptions of how ‘states are people too’.

### **Discussion upon the findings**

In 1991 the Russian *need* for more stable economy, western trade and investments shaped their foreign policy more than the *want* for becoming part of the European identity. This can be misinterpreted as a *want* for partnership with NATO, but there are no clear indications for such want. As the Russian economy starts to grow, and the military and political capacity stabilizes, we witness an increased assertiveness in Russia, and an increasingly anti-NATO tendency. After 2000 Russia is closer to balancing out NATO, and the relations slowly deteriorates, despite the diplomatic efforts made in the NATO-Russia Council. There is an obvious lack of a common ‘we-ness’, and a difference in political culture, norms, and values, however this is not what has caused most of the conflicts between them after the end of the Cold War. The enlargement debate has followed Russia and NATO since the early 1990s, and stands out as one of the main reasons why Russia and NATO have not agreed on a closer partnership. Each enlargement process has added more distress to the Russia-NATO partnership development, and Russia on their side have felt the need for balancing back by increasing their level of engagement in e.g. the CIS. NATO’s new global dimension, the new role in crisis management, peacekeeping, and the increased ‘out-of-area’ missions, have also impacted the Russia-NATO relationship. This is a political area where both *realpolitik* and constructivism theory may add valid explanations.

The partnership has developed from a pragmatic relationship towards a strategic partnership. This is a positive development. The PFP agreement in 1994, the PJC 1997, and later the NRC in 2002 have brought Russia and NATO closer together and increased the security, trust, and cooperation between them. However, most of this cooperation is still only on a practical level within defense and security policy, and very few developments have been done on the ‘social’ level. As the analysis reveals, realism terms like ‘state security’, ‘border security’, ‘energy security’, and ‘balance of terror’ are a lot more descriptive on the Russia-NATO struggles than ‘Russian values versus NATO values’, ‘lack of common understanding’, ‘different

understandings' etc. When Albania and Croatia became normative partners, this was a result of a commitment towards the common security in Europe and NATO's shared values (Bucharest Summit Declaration, 2008). The Russian Federation has not committed to these values in the same way. As the analysis shows, this is due to a fear of losing control over their own internal affairs and 'the Russian way'. Moscow has practical concerns for their national interest and state security that seems more important to them than the moral and ideological commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

## 4.2 Further discussion

Alliances are complex matters. It is like love between two people; it either works or it doesn't. To take on the challenge of explaining *why* is ambiguous, and maybe even reckless. The partnership between Russia and NATO is a complex matter. It can sometimes be difficult to analyze and understand why it sometimes work and sometimes does not. I believe that the historical dimension adds an extremely important supplement to the understanding of why Russia and NATO fail to reach a normative partnership. Their mutual mistrust is caused by a long history of adversary between the two. It could perhaps be argued that the research question could have been turned around, asking which are the dominant reasons why Russia and NATO should be able to reach a normative partnership? If we go back to the units of analysis, I believe it is important to apply the unique characteristics developed throughout their history in order to contextualize the research question, but also the conclusion. First of all, size matters. Russia is a huge country, and is not as easily integrated as the Baltic States or Albania. The preparations in order to incorporate the Russian territory would take years, and it would cost NATO taxpayers a lot of money. Secondly, Russia and NATO are severely different historically, politically, and characteristically. In order to become normative partners, they must find a way to combine their interests, values, and culture. However, when NATO during the Lisbon summit announced that they have an open door policy for everyone that 'share the same values' in order to create a European identity, this excludes Russia from the organization unless they are willing to adapt to the Western values. And the analysis does not indicate any Russian will give up their own values in order to engage in NATO.

It is however important to acknowledge that even though Russia and NATO have failed to reach a normative partnership, the relations today are a lot better than what they used to. As mentioned in the analysis, at least the diplomatic relations normalized more during the 1990s and onwards. Today NATO and Russia have established multilateral channels, increased border security, turned their military planning away from mutual confrontation, and established cooperation in areas of common threats (Pouliot, 2010, p. 4). This is more than many hoped for during the 1990s. From what the concepts tell us, it should be possible to create a European security architecture that involves both NATO and Russia. However, in light of the analysis, it does not seem likely that this will happen within the framework of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, at least not within the near future. Twenty years of attempted unification has left Russia and NATO in pretty much the same place as they were after the Cold War. The diplomatic relations have however normalized, as to repeat the citation from Pouliot's studies: "It doesn't always go very well, but at least we talk about it" (anonymous cited in Pouliot, 2010, p. 117).

### **Where to now for Russia and NATO? –Thoughts towards 2020**

At the Lisbon Summit in 2010 NATO announced their open door policy, saying that all states that shared the European values of freedom, peace, and democracy was invited to apply for partnership. This is what takes NATO from just being a security and defense organization, to increasingly develop into a value-organization as well. As a result of this, and in light of the analysis I see three possible scenarios that might speed up the partnership progress between Russia and NATO. The first two are somehow a continuation of the realism approach to it, while the third scenario calls for a constructivism understanding.

The first scenario is that the Russian Federation finds itself in a situation where the best way to secure their national interests are to engage in a normative partnership with NATO, similar to the situation in the early 1990s. As the analysis reveals, the most likely cause would be a major shift in the worlds power balance, causing Russia to see normative partnership as the best solution in order to secure their state security. Whit Asian states like China, India and Japan developing politically and economically, Russia is more vulnerable now than during the Cold War. This, however, is not very likely to happen in the near future. The second scenario would be if NATO ever finds themselves in a situation where getting Russia to join in a

normative partnership is considered highly important or absolutely necessary. In such a scenario, NATO would have to rethink their bargain with Russia, and make room for more compromises in order to please Russian demands for special rights, like veto-power and so-called 'red-button-rights' to the planned missile defense shield. Energy security is one of the strongest cards in Moscow. An energy shortage would press NATO into further discussions with Russia; however, the question will then be rather Russia wants a normative partnership with NATO under such circumstances. How much power Russia believes to be in possession of have proved to affect their policy towards NATO and the possibilities for reaching normative partnership, and the stronger Russia is, the less interested in alliance obligations, or so it seems. Still, the way it looks today, there are no indications of Russia gaining enough power to bargain more special rights within NATO before 2020.

The third scenario is what I mentioned would include more constructivism understanding. This scenario demands that Russia gets to the point where they are able to see a *want* without this being linked to a *need*. The wish for normative partnership with NATO must come with an element of ideology. –A *want* for being part of a European identity, and to create a Common European Home as a community of values, and not as military strategists only thinking about power-maximization. Russia cannot consider political cooperation with NATO a zero-sum game. Rather they have to become part of the alliance-mentality of NATO being something more than just the Washington Treaty and the military capacity. In order to get to this point, establishments like the NRC may add important value. This is what most of the former Eastern European states have done in order to prepare themselves for their transition towards normative partnership. And as Pouliot (2010, p. 117) mentioned, one should not underestimate the importance of the 'boring' and 'taken for granted' aspects of a firm timetable and regular meeting schedules that enable the officials to meet and discuss, and communicate political issues on a regular basis, forcing them to confront tough issues regularly.

I believe that the motivation behind NATO membership in most of the Alliance's member states is the belief in NATO being a positive force beyond just the security community. NATO as an alliance deters other states from going to war, and it also strengthens the military defense within each state. –But it is also a community of values that brings a positive effect to

more political areas due to the extensive diplomacy and day-to-day cooperation and contact between European countries. They are not members because they fear being outside the Alliance. The symbolic value from being part of NATO is an argument in it self. This is what Russia must understand in order to begin their preparations for normative partnership with NATO. However, as for now, Russia and NATO are planning their own separate missile defense system, ‘...for who knows, they might change their minds some day’.



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